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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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Hyderabad DCP Sumathi walked alone at night for three hours in mufti

In disguise, DCP faces harassment from 40 men

HYDERABAD, 6 MAY

Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Sumathi in Hyderabad faced harassment from around 40 men during a midnight undercover operation in Malkajgiri to assess women's safety in the city.

Without informing her department, she disguised herself as a common woman and walked alone between 12.30am and 3.30am for nearly three hours, moving around bus stops and nearby roads.

During this period, she encountered repeated inappropriate behaviour, with several men allegedly making sexual propositions. Some individuals were reportedly under the influence of alcohol, while others appeared to be substance users. None of them realised they were interacting with a senior police officer.

Following the exercise, the identified individuals were taken for counselling, police officials said.

The DCP said the operation was conducted to understand ground realities of women's safety at night beyond formal complaints. She warned that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found harassing women in future. —*Salar News*

With 112 seats & Cong tie up, Vijay stakes CM claim

Guv says come back with 118; Uncertainty over oath-taking

CHENNAI, 6 MAY

TVK Chief Vijay on Wednesday met Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and staked claim to form the government with 112 MLAs after the Congress extended support to his party, however, the Governor asked him to come back with a majorityof 118. Though Vijay was expected to take oath on 7 May, the ceremony appears unlikely.

Congress sent shockwaves in INDIA bloc after it ended its 22-year alliance with DMK to back TVK. However, the Congress has put forward a condition, stating that the alliance must keep out "communal forces".

However, Raj Bhavan sources indicated no immediate decision had been taken on inviting him to form the government, with the claim still under examination.

Congress MP Jothimani said the majority must be tested on the Assembly floor, while AICC in-charge Girish Chodankar confirmed the party would not remain an outside supporter but join the government, indicating it would seek representation in the council of ministers.

Party sources said discussions have begun on Cabinet sharing. Reports indicate that Congress is seeking two ministerial positions i. TVK, meanwhile, is expected to retain core portfolios such as home, finance, and public administration.

TVK is also in talks with smaller allies including VCK, Left parties and IUML to bridge the deficit. VCK Chief Thol Thirumavalavan said internal consultations were underway before a decision.

TVK Chief Vijay submits his letter to stake claim to form government to TN Governor Rajendra Arlekar at Lok Bhavan in Chennai on Wednesday —*PTI*

NUMBER GAME

In the 234-member Assembly, the majority mark is 118. TVK has 108 seats and, with Congress' five, reaches 113. Vijay must vacate one of his two seats, reducing TVK to 107 and effectively setting the number of his seats to 112.

Seat tally: TVK 108; DMK 59; AIADMK 47; Congress 5; PMK 4; VCK 2; CPI 2; CPI(M) 2; BJP 1; DMDK 1; AMMK 1.

AIADMK RULES OUT SUPPORT; PMK IN TALKS

The AIADMK ruled out supporting a TVK-led government, calling reports "entirely false". PMK, however, is in discussions and may consider joining the coalition if its demands, including representation in Cabinet, are met.

BENGAL ON EDGE AFTER POLL VIOLENCE

Separately, West Bengal remained tense after post-poll violence left three people dead in Kolkata, Birbhum and North 24 Parganas. Incidents of vandalism and arson at TMC offices were reported in Asansol and elsewhere.

The Election Commission has directed authorities to enforce a "zero-tolerance" approach, as the TMC and BJP traded blame over the violence. —*Salar News*

>>>*More on Page 3 & 5*

IPL final shifted from Bengaluru to Ahmedabad

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has shifted the IPL 2026 final from Bengaluru to Ahmedabad, with the Narendra Modi Stadium now set to host the title clash on 31 May. Bengaluru was originally designated to host the final, but the BCCI said the venue change was due to "operational and logistical considerations" and requirements from local authorities that were beyond its established guidelines.

According to the IPL Governing Council, the playoffs will now be played across three venues: Qualifier 1 in Dharamshala on 26 May, the Eliminator in New Chandigarh on 27 May, Qualifier 2 in New Chandigarh on 29 May, and the final in Ahmedabad on 31 May.

The development comes amid a parallel political row in Karnataka over IPL ticket allocation to MLAs. However, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar dismissed any link between the two issues.

"There is no connection between distributing tickets to MLAs and the shifting of the final match. Ahmedabad has a large stadium and more people can attend — that must be the reason," he told reporters in Bengaluru.

Shivakumar also quipped that in some places "50 per cent of tickets are reserved", while declining to comment on BCCI's explanation.

Earlier, the Karnataka government had allotted complimentary IPL tickets to MLAs, MLCs and MPs for matches at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, following demands raised in the Assembly. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 8*

Trump pauses Hormuz operations

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

US President Donald Trump said he is pausing "Project Freedom", the American operation to guide stranded vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, to allow space for negotiations with Iran, while maintaining that a blockade of Iranian ports will continue.

In a social media post, Trump said the pause would last "for a short period" as Washington works towards a possible settlement to end the ongoing conflict. He said the decision was taken on the request of Pakistan and other countries, citing what he called "tremendous military success" during the campaign against Iran and "significant progress" towards a final agreement with Tehran. Iran has not yet responded.

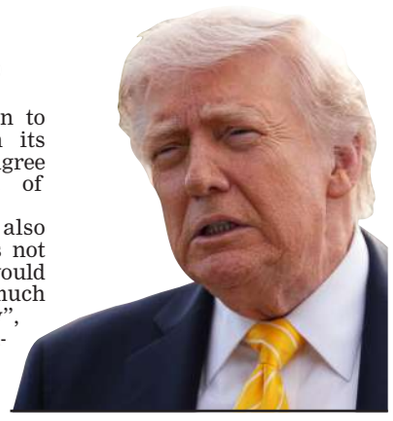
Launched only on Monday, Project Freedom was part of US efforts to secure maritime movement in the region amid escalating tensions.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the initial phase of military operations, referred to as "Operation Epic Fury", had concluded. He said, "The operation is over... we're done with that stage," while insisting that a ceasefire was still holding, though the conflict remains unresolved.

Rubio added that any lasting peace would require Iran to accept US demands on its nuclear programme and agree to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Meanwhile, Trump also warned that if a deal is not reached soon, the US would resume strikes at a "much higher level and intensity", calling previous operations comparatively limited. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 6*



INDIA, VIETNAM SET $25B TRADE TARGET, SIGN 13 DEALS

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India and Vietnam on Wednesday elevated ties to an Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and set a USD 25 billion annual trade target by 2030, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnamese President To Lam held talks in New Delhi.

Following the meeting, the two sides signed 13 agreements covering digital payments, rare earth minerals, pharmaceuticals, education, banking and cultural cooperation. Both leaders also discussed expanding defence, critical minerals and supply chain resilience amid shifting geopolitical dynamics.

The leaders exchanged views on the Indo-Pacific, including concerns over China's increasing control of the South China Sea, and affirmed commitment to peace and rule of law.

Modi said bilateral trade, currently about USD 16 billion, has doubled in a decade and will be scaled up. He also highlighted cooperation in agriculture exports, energy, and connectivity, including linking India's UPI with Vietnam's payment systems.

Lam said both sides agreed to deepen trust and strengthen security cooperation. India also thanked Vietnam for its condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack. —*PTI*

Twin blasts near BSF HQ, Army cantt in Punjab

CHANDIGARH, 6 MAY

Two back-to-back explosions near security establishments in Punjab on Tuesday night triggered panic and a political blame game, with police suspecting a possible ISI-linked plot ahead of the Operation Sindoor anniversary.

The first blast occurred around 8 pm outside the BSF Punjab Frontier headquarters in Jalandhar, while the second took place around 11 pm near the Army cantonment area in Amritsar's Khasa. No injuries were reported.

Police earlier said a scooter parked near BSF Chowk in Jalandhar caught fire, though locals reported hearing a blast-like sound. The scooter, belonging to Gurpreet Singh, was used for parcel delivery. The explosion damaged the vehicle, a traffic signal pole and windowpanes of a nearby shop. CCTV footage showed an unidentified man fleeing the spot.

Jalandhar Police said an FIR has been registered and preliminary findings suggest the use of explosive material —*PTI*

- The first blast occurred around 8 pm outside the BSF Punjab Frontier headquarters in Jalandhar, while the second took place around 11 pm near the Army cantonment area in Amritsar's Khasa.

Jalandhar Police Commissioner Dhanpreet Kaur said an FIR has been registered and preliminary findings suggest the use of explosive material. Police also said the Khalistan Liberation Force has claimed responsibility, which is being verified.

In Amritsar, SSP Suhail Mir Qasim said a loud sound was reported and initial inspection suggested an explosive device was thrown towards a boundary wall, damaging a tin sheet structure. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 4*

K'taka govt reinstates DGP Rao after sleaze video controversy

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

The Karnataka government on Wednesday revoked the suspension of DGP **K Ramachandra Rao**, reinstaing him into service, officials said.

The 1993-batch IPS officer has been posted as Director General of Police (Police Manual), a position declared equivalent to the cadre post of DGP, CID, Special Units and Economic Offences, under IPS (Pay) Rules, 2016.

Rao, who was serving as DGP (Civil Rights Enforcement), was suspended on 19 January after videos purportedly showing him in a compromising position went viral.

A departmental inquiry was initiated on 18 March. However, the government has withdrawn the suspension under the All India Services Rules as ordered by the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms following Raj Bhavan directions.

The reinstatement has drawn criticism, with questions raised over restoring the officer before conclusion of the inquiry. —*Salar News*

Hantavirus: 3 patients evacuated from cruise

PRAIA, 6 MAY

Three patients with suspected hantavirus infections were being evacuated from a cruise ship MV Hondius to the Netherlands on Wednesday, the UN health agency said. The vessel at the centre of a deadly outbreak remained off Cape Verde with nearly 150 people on board waiting to head to Spain's Canary Islands.

Associated Press footage showed health workers in protective gear heading to the ship for the evacuation that included the ship's British doctor, who was serious but has improved.

Three people have died, and one body remained on the ship, the World Health Organisation said. Eight cases have been recorded in all, three confirmed by laboratory testing. The three people evacuated were a Dutch national, 41; a British, 56; and a German, 65. Two are "serious" and the third has no symptoms but was "closely associated" with a German passenger who died on 2 May. Hantavirus spreads by inhaling contaminated rodent droppings and can spread person-to-person, though the WHO calls that rare. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

AFTER WB POLLS

'Can't wait for India': B'desh, China to discuss Teesta

DHAKA, 6 MAY

Bangladesh will not indefinitely wait for progress on the Teesta water-sharing agreement with India and will continue exploring alternative development partnerships, Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman said.

"But we cannot just sit and wait for that," The Daily Star quoted the Bangladesh minister as saying. "We have our own work to do."

This is even after the electoral setback of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's TMC.

Rahman said Bangladesh Will pursue its own priorities, adding that the Teesta restoration project backed by China would be a key agenda item during his upcoming talks in Beijing.

The Teesta River originates from the glaciers of North Sikkim. From Sikkim, it flows through West Bengal before entering Bangladesh —*PTI*

His remarks come amid hopes in some quarters that a change in political dynamics in West Bengal could reopen space for renewed India-Bangladesh negotiations on Teesta agreement.

The Teesta dispute has remained unresolved for over four decades. An interim 1983 arrangement allocated 36 per cent of dry-season flow to Bangladesh and 39 per cent to India, but no permanent treaty followed.

A revised 2011 agreement also collapsed after Mamata Banerjee opposed it, citing water shortages in her state.

Rahman stressed that Bangladesh's development decisions would be guided by national interest, noting that waiting for consensus in India was not a practical approach.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed said Dhaka hopes there will be no "pushback" of suspected illegal migrants following recent electoral outcomes in India's border states, while border forces remain on alert.

Ahmed further warned of action if "push-in" incidents occur, amid ongoing tensions over migration allegations between the two neighbouring countries. —*Agencies*

2 kids drown in a pond in KGF

KOLAR, 6 MAY

Two children, including an SSLC pass-out girl, drowned in a farm pond (Krishi Honda) at Bodenahalli village, in Kolar Gold Fields on Tuesday evening. The deceased are Tanushree, 15; and Karthik, 8, both residents of the village. According to Sub-Inspector Kiran Kumar of Kasamudram Police Station, the children were playing near the pond while family members were cutting grass nearby for cattle. After completing their work and returning home, the elders noticed the children were missing. A search was immediately launched, during which the children were found drowned in the pond. Bangarpet Tahasildar Sujatha, in a video message, urged parents to closely monitor their children's activities, especially during the summer vacation period, and said that children often venture near water bodies to beat the heat. —*Salar News*

BJP Sringeri MLA takes oath after recount

Speaker dismisses BJP's claims that he was avoiding their calls, says he acted as per law

Sringeri MLA DN Jeevaraj, LoP in the Assembly R Ashoka, Speaker UT Khader, LoP in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy and others during the oath taking ceremony at Vidhana Soudha —*X @RASHOKABJP*

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

BJP leader DN Jeevaraj on Wednesday took oath as MLA after the recounting of votes declared him winner by the returning officer.

Jeevaraj, who had lost the 2023 Sringeri Assembly election to Congress leader TD Raje Gowda, was declared elected on 3 May after reverification and recounting of postal ballots in compliance with a High Court order. The recount reduced 255 votes from Gowda's tally, overturning his earlier victory margin of 201 votes and reversing the result.

The recount followed an election petition filed by Jeevaraj.

The BJP MLA took oath in the name of the presiding deity of Sringeri, Sharada Devi, in the presence of Assembly Speaker UT Khader, Opposition Leader of the Assembly and Legislative Council, R Ashoka and Chalavadi Narayanaswamy respectively at the Vidhana Soudha.

- Jeevaraj lost the 2023 election to Congress' Raje Gowda by 201 votes. But after a recount, he was declared winner on 3 May, with 255 votes from Gowda's tally reduced

Ashoka had earlier alleged that Khader was delaying the process and not picking his phone calls.

However, Khader told press that there was no delay in administering the oath to Jeevaraj.

"Where have we delayed? The application was submitted at 11am. If an application is given in the morning and by evening someone says it's delayed — how is that a delay?" he said, dismissing the allegations.

The Speaker said the matter involved "technical issues" that required examination before fixing a date for oath-taking. "When such a matter comes, we also need to examine it and take a decision as per rules. If an application is given in the morning, at least 24 hours must be given."

Khader stressed that his role was bound by the Constitution and not influenced by political considerations.

He also pointed to possible legal complications in hastily administering the oath. "If I give the oath to one person and tomorrow the court declares someone else the winner, what happens then? Will it automatically cancel? Will confusion arise?"

Notably, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had earlier termed the recount "Vote Dacoity" Jeevaraj and said an FIR has been registered against him. —*PTI*

TO AVERT WATER SHORTAGE

In lieu of El Nino, govt holds meet on water security

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

In view of possible El Nino conditions and anticipated water stress across the State, the Karnataka government on Wednesday convened a high-level technical review meeting to strengthen drought preparedness, officials said.

During the meeting, experts strongly recommended prioritising groundwater recharge initiatives and adopting long-term water conservation strategies. They also stressed the need for large-scale public awareness campaigns promoting rainwater harvesting, a statement said.

"We must begin preparing immediately to effectively face the possible impact of El Nino in the coming months. Special attention must be given to preventing water leakage from tanks, pick-up dams, and reservoirs," Minor Irrigation Minister NS Boseraju said at the meeting.

He told Executive Engineers across all 18 departmental divisions to take full responsibility for the maintenance and monitoring of all tanks, reservoirs, and irrigation structures under their jurisdiction. They are to visit all lakes and water bodies in the next four-five days and prepare a report.

"Additionally, steps must be taken to organise awareness programmes to take the Department's newly initiated 'Neeriddare Naale' (Water is Future) scheme," Boseraju directed. The scheme aims to address the 525 Gram Panchayats in 15 districts that have been over exploiting ground water.

The meeting was attended by scientists from the IISc, experts from the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre, the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, the National Disaster Management Authority, , among others. —*Agencies*

El Nino conditions may cause water stress and agricultural disruptions during the southwest monsson cycles —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

Cong pro-social justice: CM after Jarki's barb

MYSURU, 6 MAY

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday said that his government is committed to social justice, power sharing and economic distribution as such measures are must to build a discrimination- free equal society.

His comments come a day after PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi said that the party must do more for AHINDA communities (minorities, backward classes and Dalits) if it wanted to come to power in 2028.

Speaking after inaugurating the State-level Shivayogi Siddarameshwara Jayanthi celebrations in Mysuru, Siddaramaiah said his government strongly believes in equally distributing wealth, resources and power.

He said that the ongoing caste census would form the basis for future policy decisions, asserting that the exercise was crucial to advancing social justice in the State. "We have gone beyond the Nagamohan Das report and implemented internal reservation... now it has been revised to 5.25 per cent, 5.25 per cent, and 4.5 per cent".

He said that education was imperative for backward classes to come into the mainstream of society and eradicate caste.

He also asked people to emulate the ideals of 12th century social reformer Sharana Siddarameshwara.

WILL COMPLETE 5 YRS

Speaking to the press separately, Siddaramaiah asserted that the government would complete its full five-year tenure in the State, but sidestepped whether he would hold the top post.

On the issue of a leadership change, he told reporters to stop asking "the same thing again" and said that the High Command decides. "I will meet (party leader) Rahul Gandhi only if he invites me (to New Delhi). I can reveal about Cabinet reshuffle or Cabinet expansion after meeting him". —*Salar News*

Khandre seeks to translocate 347 trees in Mysuru to build a flyover

MYSURU, 6 MAY

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre has asked officials to explore plans to translocate 347 trees from a junction in Mysuru where the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) seeks to build a flyover taken up at a cost of Rs 63.67 crore.

The NHAI has marked the 347 trees on either side of the National Highway 275 (Bengaluru-Mysuru) to smoothen the flow of vehicles at the junction in Mysuru. These include trees such as Teak, Mahagany, Neem, and rain trees, among others on both sides of the corridor of Nanjangud Road, Hunsur Road, Bannimantap Road and Fountain circle Road that intersect the Manipal Hospital junction in the city.

Khandre paid an impromptu visit to the junction, and asked officials to explore plans of relocating the trees instead of cutting them, to ensure that the green cover of the city is preserved.

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre during the foundation laying ceremony of a Rs 7 crore hanging bridge in Dubare Haadi, on Wednesday —*SALAR*

Khandre also directed officials to reverify and examine the exact number of trees that can be saved, axed or translocated.

A fresh report must be submitted to him.

The inspection gains significance following concerns over environmental degradation, including the loss of shade and increased pollution.

Deputy Conservator of Forests Paramesh, DCF Social Forestry Shankaregowda were present. —*Salar News*

Foundation laid for Rs 7cr hanging bridge in Kodagu

KODAGU, 6 MAY

Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre laid the foundation stone for a Rs 7.3 crore hanging bridge that aims to connect Dubare Haadi to the mainland in Kodagu. Tribals residing in Dubare have to cross the Cauvery to reach Nanjarayapattana and Kushalnagar, traversing nearly 10km through the forest area to reach the Gram Panchayat.

The hanging bridge, aims to fulfil long-pending demands and will help tourists and nearly 150 households in Dubare Haadi access the town, Khandre noted.

On human-elephant conflicts, Khandre said that a committee of experts has already submitted its report, but invited suggestions from forest-fringe communities.

He also said that there was a need of selective population control for certain species to prevent loss of human lives and crops. —*Salar News*

Nora Fatehi to appear before NCW over 'Sarke Chunar' song

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Actor Nora Fatehi will appear before the National Commission for Women (NCW) on Thursday after being summoned for allegedly portraying women indecently in the film song 'Sarke Chunar'. The song appears in 'KD The Devil', a Kannada film, dubbed in four languages, including Hindi.

Fatehi, who is scheduled to appear before the NCW on Thursday at 11.30AM, had distanced herself from the Hindi version of the song, saying she had shot the Kannada version and that her permission was not taken for its use in Hindi.

Earlier, Fatehi had failed to appear before the Commission, stating that she was abroad, and had sought a fresh date for the hearing.

Last month, actor Sanjay Dutt also appeared before the NCW and submitted a written apology, expressing regret for any "unintended" societal harm.

The Hindi version of the song, released on 15 March on YouTube, triggered public outrage for its allegedly sexually explicit lyrics.

The makers removed the Hindi version from YouTube amd the lyricist, singer and director apologised. —*PTI*

Deepfake of Nimmi used to dupe Belagavi man of Rs 7.9L

BELAGAVI, 6 MAY

A 76-year-old man in Belagavi city was allegedly cheated of Rs 7.9 lakh in an online investment scam that used an AI-generated deepfake video misusing the name of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to lure investors, police said.

An online fraud case was registered at the cybercrime police station on 1 May. According to Police Commissioner Bhushan Gulabrao Borase, the victim, Prakash Gubbi, said he came across a YouTube video in November last year in which the minister appeared to endorse an investment scheme, with a link provided for investments.

He clicked the link, entered his details, and was later contacted by a person identifying himself as Adarsh Anand, who persuaded him to invest. The victim initially invested a small amount, after which the application showed profits of USD 65,000.

When he attempted to withdraw the amount, he was asked to pay Rs 4.2 lakh as "customs duty." After paying, he was asked for more money, leading him to realise the fraud. —*PTI*

DEAD FISH FLOAT IN PONDS

BMRCL pumping waste water into Cubbon?

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

A citizen's group has alleged that the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) is pumping contaminated waste water from the Cubbon Park metro into Cubbon Park, causing severe environmental damage.

S Umesh, an advocate and President of the Cubbon Park Walkers Association, said in a statement that the water is "filthy black and smells contaminated". He alleged that the BMRCL was pumping contaminated waste water from their underground areas into the park, but added that the source of the water could also be Chinnaswammyy Stadium, "which would be worse during match days".

Detailing the flow of the water, Umesh stated that there was old Rajakaluve (canal) that comes from Cubbon Road through Queens Road – which is where the Metro station is - into the park. He said that it goes though the bamboo grove and wetland in the park. From here, the water goes into the lotus pond and is then channelled into Bal Bhavan, around the old bamboo island, the boating area, the Venkatappa Art Gallery and Cubbon Horticulture Dept Office and out to Siddalingaiah Junction to join the Rajakaluve SWD.

Fish have been seen floating dead in Cubbon Park's famous lotus pond, especially after the rains, and allegation of waste water sent into the City's lungspace —*SALAR*

However, a walker noted that fish have been seen coming to the surface of the pond, raising concerns that the contaminated water is significantly impacting the park's ecosystems.

Additionally, a few days after the massive hailstorms in the City last week, dead fish have been seen floating around the pond.

Umesh alleged that with the Horticulture management and staff on Census duty, regular maintenance is not happening. He stated that lots of branches that fell during the recent rains are yet to be cleared. —*Salar News*

DIY ROADS

With the City's roads in perpetual disarray, officials in Jayanagar place a potted plant to demarcate a caved in portion, on Wednesday PHOTO: SALAR

KPTCL TO FINISH KADANDALE 400 KV POWER SUBSTATION PROJECT BY 15 JULY

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

The Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL) has set upon itself a 15 July target to complete the strategically important Kadandale 400 kV power substation project. Through this project, KPTCL aims to ensure uninterrupted power supply to Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, which are key industrial hubs, officials said on Wednesday.

The project, located at Kadandale village in Moodbidri taluk, had remained stalled for nearly three years due to land-related litigation, officials said.

KPTCL has planned to obtain line clearance on the existing 400 kV UPCL-Hebbanahalli transmission corridor between 6 May and 24 May, a statement said.

During this period, alternative arrangements have been made to manage transmission loads. However, officials stated that short-duration load shedding may become unavoidable. The target was set after directions by Energy Minister KJ George. —*PTI*

SC refuses to adjourn plea against excluding CJI from EC panel

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to adjourn the hearing on pleas challenging the constitutional validity of a 2023 law altering the appointment process of election commissioners which excluded the Chief Justice, saying the issue was "more important" than the ongoing Sabarimala-related proceedings.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma rejected the Centre's request for adjournment after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said he was occupied before a nine-judge Constitution bench hearing matters related to religious freedom, including the Sabarimala temple issue.

Emphasising the significance of the case, Justice Datta observed, "This matter is more important than any other matter." The bench directed petitioners to conclude their arguments by Thursday and allowed the Centre to present its submissions later. The hearing is currently underway.

The challenge concerns the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023. The law replaces the Chief Justice of India in the selection committee with a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, giving the executive a 2–1 majority.

Petitioners argue the Act violates the principle of separation of powers and disregards a 2023 Supreme Court ruling that mandated inclusion of the CJI in the panel until Parliament enacted a new law.

Earlier in March 2026, Chief Justice Surya Kant recused himself from the case to avoid any conflict of interest, as the legislation directly concerns the role of his office. *—PTI*

BJP bulldozing meat shops: TMC

Says Central forces did not intervene despite violence in Kolkata

KOLKATA, 6 MAY

The TMC on Wednesday alleged that BJP supporters used a bulldozer to demolish several meat shops in Kolkata's New Market area during victory celebrations, calling it an act of "hooliganism". BJP, however said they had nothing to do with the violence.

The party also accused central forces of failing to intervene when the incident allegedly took place on Tuesday night.

In a post on X, the TMC said BJP's "Poriborton" had arrived "with a bulldozer", claiming mobs went on a rampage, damaging shops and vandalising a Trinamool Congress office. It described the incident as part of a "pattern of intimidation" after the election results.

Sharing a video, TMC leader Derek O'Brien claimed that a bulldozer was brought in near New Market with police permission during celebrations, while Central Armed Police Forces stood by. He termed it a sign of "lawlessness".

In another incident, attempts were allegedly made to change the name of a local road in North 24 Pargana's Barasat town.

During the early hours of Tuesday, a group of BJP supporters gathered in front of a gate named Masjid Bari Road in the town's Moyna area. A few of them took a ladder and climbed up to the top and started demolishing the nameplate. After the demolition, they also changed it to Netaji Pally Road.

Meanwhile, two former chief secretaries, Alapan Bandyopadhyay and H K Dwivedi, have resigned as chief advisors to outgoing CM Mamata Banerjee after the change in government after change in administration.

In a post on X, TMC said BJP's 'Poriborton' had arrived 'with a bulldozer, claiming mobs went on a rampage, damaging shops *SCREENGRAB*

> **This time I won the election with almost 10,000 votes. The Hindu people of Nandigram made me win again. There, the entire Muslim vote went to TMC... I will work for the Hindus of Nandigram** -Suvendu Adhikari, BJP leader

SECURITY OUTSIDE ABHISHEK'S HOME WITHDRAWN

Additional police deployment outside TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee's Kolkata residence and office has been withdrawn.

High-end security, including automated scissor barricades at his residence, has been removed.

Despite reduced security, Abhishek Banerjee continues to receive Z-category protection as per protocol. *—PTI*

Students injured in ABVP-DSO clash near Calcutta University

Several students were injured in a clash between ABVP and the Left-wing DSO near the College Street campus of Calcutta University on Tuesday.

DSO state secretary Biswajit Roy alleged that ABVP activists unleashed violence following the declaration of the assembly election results.

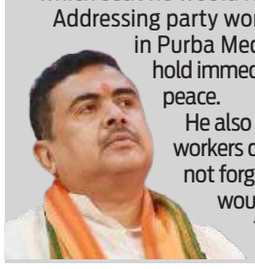
He claimed DSO members were attacked while trying to "protect the democratic atmosphere" of the campus, accusing ABVP supporters of tearing down banners and festoons.

Will vacate one of two assembly seats in 10 days: Suvendu

Suvendu Adhikari, BJP leader who defeated West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur and secured Nandigram for the third consecutive time in recent Assembly polls, said on Wednesday he would vacate one of the two constituencies within 10 days. He added that the party's central leadership would decide which seat he would retain.

Addressing party workers and supporters in Nandigram in Purba Medinipur district, he urged them not to hold immediate victory processions and maintain peace.

He also referred to alleged attacks on BJP workers during the TMC regime, saying he would not forget the "atrocities" faced by them and would pursue action against perpetrators through legal channels. *—PTI*



Himanta resigns as CM, oath-taking likely after 11 May

GUWAHATI, 6 MAY

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday resigned along with his cabinet colleagues, paving the way for formation of a new BJP-led government after the NDA secured 102 seats in the 126-member Assembly.

Officials said the Governor accepted the resignation and asked Sarma to continue as caretaker Chief Minister until the new government assumes office. The Assembly elections were held on April 9 and counting took place on 4 May.

Sarma said the oath-taking ceremony is likely after 11 May, adding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited but is unavailable until then. "It is a historic win," he said.

On selection of the next Chief Minister, Sarma said the BJP has appointed Union Minister JP Nadda and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini as central observers. The legislature party will elect its leader in their presence, followed by NDA consultation. He said the meeting of BJP MLAs will be held before 11 May and the date will be finalised by the observers. Sarma added that the new Chief Minister will decide cabinet composition, including possible inclusion of new faces. *—PTI*

Centre eyes PM SHRI rollout in Bengal, Tamil Nadu

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Ministry of Education will write to the Chief Secretaries of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu urging them to sign a Memorandum of Understanding at the earliest for implementation of the Centre's PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) scheme in state-run schools, sources said. Officials said letters would be sent "today or tomorrow" seeking early adoption of the scheme, under which selected schools are developed as model institutions aligned with the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). The DMK and TMC have opposed PM SHRI, linking it to NEP 2020 and alleging it undermines state autonomy and language policies. The DMK has described it as a "Trojan horse" for Hindi. Both states are yet to sign MoU with the Centre. *—PTI*

TMC councillor held for carrying arms at airport

KOLKATA, 6 MAY

TMC councillor Amirul Sekh Islam, Ward 14 councillor of Pujali municipality under Budge Budge Assembly constituency, was arrested on Tuesday night in connection with an old Arms Act case at Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport. The case dates to 21 September, 2025, when he arrived to catch an Indigo flight, during which CISF found an empty magazine and six rounds of 7.65 mm ammunition in his baggage during screening. According to CISF sub-inspector Gopal Shaw's complaint, he initially claimed a valid licence and was given seven days to produce documents but failed to do so. Case registered at airport police station under Arms Act; investigation legal proceedings ongoing. *—PTI*

—ANI

J&K punished for not electing BJP: Omar on statehood

SRINAGAR, 6 MAY

It is deeply unfair to the people of Jammu and Kashmir that the promise of statehood is not being kept, says Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah while going on to ask if they are being punished for not electing a BJP chief minister. "If that is the case, the BJP should have stood up in Parliament or told the Supreme Court that till a BJP chief minister sits in Jammu and Kashmir, you will not get statehood... Then I would have believed that these people are telling the truth," Abdullah said. Expressing acute disappointment over the Centre's delay in restoring statehood, the National Conference leader said it amounted to deceit and a breach of promise. *—PTI*

Nitish Kumar's son may join Bihar cabinet on 7 May

PATNA, 6 MAY

JD(U) President Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar is likely to be inducted into the Samrat Choudhary-led Bihar cabinet during the expansion on Thursday. He has reportedly agreed after earlier hesitation and persuasion by party leaders, and may be sworn in on 7 May.Nishant, who joined JD(U), had earlier declined a ministerial role, saying he wanted to work at the grassroots level. His entry comes after Nitish Kumar stepped down as Chief Minister following his election to the Rajya Sabha, with the BJP-led government taking charge under Choudhary. JD(U) Bihar unit president Umesh Kushwaha said the party expects 16 berths in the expanded cabinet. The council is capped at 30 ministers. Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister Shah and others are likely to attend. *—PTI*

Actor Rajinikanth met DMK President MK Stalin in Chennai on Wednesday. The meeting was described by sources as a courtesy call, with Rajinikanth expressing solidarity with Stalin following DMK's electoral setback *—PTI*

'Backstabbed', says DMK; Cong asks 'what's the issue?'

CHENNAI, 6 MAY

A political row erupted on Wednesday after reports that the Congress may support actor-turned-politician Vijay's TVK in forming the government in Tamil Nadu, with the DMK calling it a "backstab" and the Congress rejecting the charge.

DMK spokesperson Saravanan Anadurai told PTI Videos that Congress had "backstabbed the people of Tamil Nadu" by aligning with TVK, adding the decision came even before the electoral process was fully complete. "Even before the ink on the returning officer's signature on the victory certificate dried up, they've gone ahead with an alliance," he said.

He also questioned the arithmetic of the proposed alliance, saying TVK lacked enough numbers and Congress had only five MLAs. He further alleged the Congress was "self-destructing" for "two berths" in a potential TVK cabinet and claimed AIADMK too had extended support, raising doubts over stability.

In response, Congress media and publicity chairperson Pawan Khera rejected the accusations, saying it "cannot be called backstabbing". He argued that like-minded parties forming government was not unusual and cited past electoral separations between the two parties. Khera also referred to December 2013, when DMK decided to contest Lok Sabha polls independently, saying such decisions were democratic rights. He added that during their alliance, Congress was never "hankering after positions" and had not sought posts in governance. *—PTI*

Cong CM race tightens in Kerala

T'PURAM, 6 MAY

Lobbying has intensified within the Congress-led UDF over the choice of Kerala's next Chief Minister, with camps of VD Satheesan, KC Venugopal and Ramesh Chennithala making competing claims based on popularity, MLA support and organisational experience.

The Congress High Command has appointed senior leaders Mukul Wasnik and Ajay Maken as observers to assess the situation following the UDF's landslide return to power with 102 seats in the Assembly, securing over one crore votes out of 2.15 crore polled.

All three frontrunners belong to the Nair community and are considered protégés of late leader K Karunakaran. Chennithala and Satheesan won their constituencies Haripad and Paravoor with large margins, while Venugopal, AICC general secretary (organisation), did not contest.Chennithala's camp has credited Rahul Gandhi and the Congress leadership, including Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, for the victory, and highlighted the impact of the "five guarantees" campaign. He chaired the UDF campaign committee.

Satheesan's supporters argue he led the UDF as Leader of Opposition and enjoys backing from alliance partners, including the Indian Union Muslim League, though he is said to lack majority MLA support.

Venugopal's camp counters that MLA backing is crucial, with claims that most of the 63 Congress MLAs support him. His supporters cite his role in the "Indira Guarantee" campaign, candidate selection, alliance coordination and organisational management.

Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala's supporters have stressed on his long organisational experience and claimed seniority, while posters backing all three leaders have appeared across Kerala as the internal race intensifies. *—PTI*

VD Satheesan, KC Venugopal, Ramesh Chennithala *—PTI*

Cong claims 17,086 duplicate entries in Haryana local polls

CHANDIGARH/ NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Haryana Congress on Wednesday alleged large-scale duplication in voter lists ahead of the May 10 municipal polls, claiming to have identified 17,086 duplicate entries involving 8,543 voters in Panchkula and other parts of the state.

At a press conference, Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, flanked by state unit chief Rao Narender Singh, said the findings emerged from a month-long, ward-wise verification exercise across all 20 wards of the Panchkula Municipal Corporation, which has around 2.8 lakh voters.

Calling it a "startling truth", Surjewala said the party had submitted a memorandum with evidence to the State Election Commission and the Returning Officer, who have assured an inquiry.

He alleged the scale of duplication indicated "active connivance" of officials and accused the BJP of indulging in "vote chori" to manipulate the mandate. "If we are wrong, send us to jail," he said.

The Congress demanded immediate sanitisation of electoral rolls, removal of duplicates, a time-bound probe and police action.

Surjewala also reiterated Rahul Gandhi's demand for machine-readable voter lists.

Polling will be held on May 10 in Ambala, Panchkula and Sonipat municipal corporations, and other civic bodies, with counting scheduled for 13 May. *—PTI*

Every 6th BJP MP won via vote chori: RaGa

In New Delhi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that every sixth BJP MP in the Lok Sabha secured his or her seat through "vote chori" and asked if they should be labelled "ghuspethiya" in that party's own parlance. Gandhi also claimed that the BJP would not be able to win even 140 seats today in the Lok Sabha if fair elections are held. *—PTI*

CHANGE OF BATTLE PLANS

SP scraps agreement with I-PAC for 2027 UP assembly polls

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Samajwadi Party (SP) in Uttar Pradesh, where assembly elections are due in 2027, has decided to scrap its contract with political consultancy firm I-PAC. The move reportedly follows defeat of ruling Trinamul Congress in West Bengal and DMK in Tamil Nadu, both of whom were I-PAC's clients.

Sources said another political consultancy company being run by a former I-PAC employee would now help the SP head Akhilesh Kumar in the management of next year's assembly elections in UP.

As a result, sources said, the agreement between I-PAC and SP finalised earlier this year, got "off the table". The situation aggravated with the ED arresting I-PAC director Vinesh Chandel last month in connection with alleged Bengal coal smuggling case, further hitting the operations of the I-PAC.

All these made it further difficult for the I-PAC to effectively engage with its clients and help them prepare for the coming elections, especially in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. This created uncertainty among its political clients and raised questions about the firm's ability to implement large-scale election plans.

The recent West Bengal and Tamil Nadu polls outcome also made the SP leadership and its poll managers rethink over its association with I-PAC. The TMC and DMK's defeat made the SP sceptical and doubtful about the ability of the political consultancy company to spearhead its poll preparations for the crucial UP assembly elections, sources further added.

It has been further learnt that I-PAC's political operations were crippled largely in the aftermath of ED raid forcing it to considerably scale down its operations in Bengal. Sources said this created a divide between the I-PAC and TMC effecting their relationship.

This perception of underperformance is said to have influenced the SP's internal reading of I-PAC's effectiveness and its move to go back to its traditional method of getting feedback from its ground workers instead of a consultancy company like I-PAC, the party sources said. *—Agencies*

6-yr-old UP girl's video prompts road repair in UP

LAKHIMPUR KHERI, 6 MAY

A heartfelt appeal by a six-year-old girl on social media led to swift action by the district administration in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri district. Manavi Singh, a Class 1 student from Salempur Kon village near Lakhimpur city, posted a video addressing the district magistrate. "DM uncle, you are very good... please get the road by my house repaired," she said, showing herself wading through a waterlogged brick road. The video went viral and caught District Magistrate Anjani Kumar Singh's attention. He then visited the village, met Manavi and her family, and assured prompt action. He found that the brick road connecting her home to the main road was uneven and waterlogged. —PTI

1 dead as security, 'coal thieves' clash in Jharkhand

GIRIDIH, 6 MAY

A man was killed and six security guards injured in a clash between guards and alleged coal thieves in Jharkhand's Giridih district, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place on Tuesday night at a coal siding under Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) within Mufassil Police Station limits. Sadar SDPO Jeetwahan Oraon said a villager died and his body has been sent for post-mortem. Six injured guards are undergoing treatment at a CCL hospital. An investigation has been launched. Project manager Ram Sagar alleged around 100 locals attempted to steal coal, attacking guards with stones when stopped and fleeing after police arrived. Villagers later protested, alleging the guards killed the man. —PTI

— FREEPIK

Delhi logs highest dengue cases in April in 5 yrs: MCD

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Delhi recorded 52 dengue cases in April, the highest for the month in five years, according to Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) data. The figure marks a steady rise from 42 cases in 2025, 31 in 2024, 24 in 2023 and 12 in 2022. Overall, 107 dengue cases were reported in the first four months of 2026. The city also logged 29 malaria cases till April, lower than 2025 and 2024 but higher than 2023. Officials cited sporadic April rains and intensified anti-larval drives, fogging and inspections. Over 12.15 lakh house visits were conducted, with 15,649 breeding sites found. Authorities issued 16,261 notices, launched 1,712 prosecutions, and carried out 358 Guppy-8 interventions. —PTI

MP govt college rolls out engg course in Hindi

INDORE, 6 MAY

A government-run engineering college in Indore has introduced a BTech Civil Engineering course in Hindi medium to promote technical education in the mother tongue, officials said on Wednesday. Shri GS Institute of Technology and Science (SGSITS) will begin the four-year course from the 2026–27 academic session. Students continuing the programme in Hindi till final year will receive an incentive of Rs 2 lakh. SGSITS, a government-aided autonomous institute, has offered Civil Engineering in English since 1952. It currently has 90 English-medium seats, with 30 additional Hindi-medium seats approved, taking total intake to 120. Officials said AICTE-approved books are being translated into Hindi and faculty trained. However, challenges remain in adapting technical education, with a previous Hindi Biomedical course seeing limited uptake. —PTI

Punjab CM calls blast BJP's political ploy

Top cop contradicts CM and suspects Pakistan role, BJP hits back at Mann's claim

CHANDIGARH, 6 MAY

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav offered sharply contrasting assessments on Wednesday following twin blasts near BSF-linked installations in the state, triggering a political row.

While the DGP suggested a possible Pakistan ISI-backed angle, the Chief Minister alleged a political conspiracy by the BJP and claimed the incidents were being "hyped for electoral purposes". DGP Yadav said the Amritsar blast was of low intensity and no organisation had claimed responsibility.

However, he noted intelligence inputs pointing towards possible involvement of Pakistan's ISI, given the proximity of the incidents to the anniversary of Operation Sindoor. In contrast, Mann termed the blasts "minor" and alleged that the BJP was attempting to politicise the situation ahead of Assembly elections. He accused the party of making provocative statements and suggested the incidents were part of a larger political narrative being built against the state government.

Forensic team personnel inspect at the blast site close to the Army cantonment area at Khasa, in Amritsar on Wednesday ANI

He also linked the situation to developments following the passage of an anti-sacrilege law, alleging attempts to destabilise Punjab. The BJP criticised Mann's remarks. Party spokesperson Sambit Patra said it was "irresponsible" for a Chief Minister to make political allegations without awaiting probe reports, especially in a border state.

Another BJP leader Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that law and order had deteriorated under the AAP government, citing a rise in violent incidents. He accused the state administration of focusing on political priorities instead of public safety.

Opposition parties in Punjab also targeted the government. Shiromani Akali Dal President Sukhbir Singh Badal said repeated intelligence lapses reflected serious governance failure. The incidents come weeks after an explosion on a freight corridor rail track in Patiala's Shambhu area. Four members of a pro-Khalistan module allegedly backed by Pakistan's ISI were arrested. —PTI

Suspected Pak boat found abandoned near Kutch

A suspected Pakistani boat was found abandoned in a creek along Gujarat's Kutch coast on Wednesday, BSF sources said. Personnel discovered the vessel near the India–Pakistan maritime border during patrol. An initial search recovered fishing equipment, with nothing suspicious found. Security has been stepped up. Officials said while Indian fishermen are barred from entering the creek region of the Arabian Sea, Pakistani fishermen often cross over to fish and sometimes flee, abandoning their boats on spotting BSF patrols.

NIA chargesheets doctor in ISIS-linked bioterror plot

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted three men, including a doctor, over an alleged ISIS-linked plot to carry out mass poisoning using a biological toxin.

The accused — Hyderabad-based Dr Syed Ahmed Mohiuddin and Azad and Mohammad Suhel from Uttar Pradesh — were charged before a special NIA court in Ahmedabad. The agency said they acted under foreign handlers to recruit radicalised youth and promote terror.

They had planned to use ricin, a highly toxic substance derived from castor seeds and classified under Schedule I of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to carry out the "nefarious agenda of ISIS, it said. The case was originally registered by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) following the arrest of Dr Mohiuddin, an MBBS from China, after he was caught at a toll plaza carrying illegal weapons, a bottle containing four litres of castor oil, and other incriminatory articles in his car in November 2025.Investigation by the ATS had led to the arrest of the other two accused the same day. —PTIs

- The accused had planned to use ricin, a highly toxic substance derived from castor seeds and classified under Schedule I of the Chemical Weapons Convention

Bhojshala mosque built on pre-existing temple, claims ASI

The disputed Bhojshala temple–Kamal Maula mosque complex in Dhar district, Madhya Pradesh —ANI

INDORE, 6 MAY

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has informed the Madhya Pradesh High Court that the disputed Bhojshala temple–Kamal Maula mosque complex was constructed using remains of pre-existing temples dating back to the Paramara period. The submission was made on Tuesday based on a 98-day scientific survey and a report exceeding 2,000 pages.

The Hindu community regards Bhojshala as a temple dedicated to Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), while the Muslim side claims it as the Kamal Maula Mosque. The site is a protected monument under the ASI.

During the hearing before Justices Vijay Kumar Shukla and Alok Awasthi at the Indore bench, Additional Solicitor General Sunil Kumar Jain, appearing for the ASI, presented findings from the survey conducted two years ago. He cited architectural remains, sculptural fragments, inscription slabs and Nagakarnika inscriptions as evidence of a large structure linked to literary and educational activities during the Paramara era.

The ASI report concludes that the current structure was built using components such as pillars and beams from earlier temples. It also noted that Sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions predate Arabic and Persian inscriptions, suggesting earlier occupation. Some inscriptions and sculptures were found damaged or defaced.

Addressing concerns over discrepancies in earlier ASI submissions, Jain said previous studies lacked advanced scientific methods, unlike the latest survey which used technologies such as Ground Penetrating Radar.

The court continues to hear multiple petitions and a writ appeal on the site's religious character, with proceedings set to resume on Wednesday. —PTI

- The Hindu community regards Bhojshala as a temple dedicated to Vagdevi (Goddess Saraswati), while the Muslim side claims it as the Kamal Maula Mosque. The site is a protected under the ASI

BCI seeks action as HC judge jails lawyer

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Bar Council of India (BCI) on Wednesday sought urgent intervention from Chief Justice of India Surya Kant over a "deeply disturbing" incident involving an Andhra Pradesh High Court judge who allegedly sent a young advocate to 24-hour judicial custody for a procedural lapse.

In a formal representation, BCI chairperson and senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra termed the conduct of Justice Tarlada Rajasekhar Rao "grossly inappropriate" and damaging to confidence in the Bar. He said the move was necessary to preserve the dignity, moral authority and public confidence of the judiciary, stressing that judges command respect through fairness, restraint and humility.

The controversy relates to proceedings on 5 May. A viral video shows the judge rebuking a junior lawyer, with around two years' experience, for failing to produce a specific order copy during a hearing. Despite apologising and citing physical pain, the advocate was allegedly told, "now you will learn," before being taken into custody.

The BCI said the action lacked proportionality and fairness, arguing that lawyers, especially juniors, are entitled to correction without humiliation. It warned such incidents could create a chilling effect within the legal fraternity and undermine mutual respect between the Bench and the Bar. —PTI

- A viral video shows the judge rebuking a junior lawyer, with around two years' experience, for failing to produce a specific order copy during a hearing

4 farmers dead as shed collapses after Telangana rains

KARIMNAGAR/ CHENNAI, 6 MAY

Four farmers were killed and three others injured after tin-roofed sheds and dilapidated structures collapsed during heavy rain and strong winds in Telangana's Mancherial district, officials said on Wednesday.

The incidents occurred late Tuesday night in two villages of Luxettipet mandal, where farmers had taken shelter.

Two deaths were reported in Kothuru village, while two others died in a separate collapse in Gampalapalli. The injured were shifted to a hospital in Karimnagar. Officials said unseasonal rain and gusty winds weakened the structures, and an investigation is underway.

Heatwave in parts of TN

Meanwhile, the IMD said heatwave conditions will persist in northern Tamil Nadu, even as heavy rain is expected in southern and western districts from Thursday. Temperatures are likely to remain about 2°C above normal in several areas during 'Agni Natchathiram'. Vellore recorded the highest temperature at 39.8°C, while Kodaikanal saw the lowest at 11.8°C. Rainfall has already intensified, with Tiruchirappalli recording 10 cm and Tiruvarur 6 cm in 24 hours. —PTI

11-year-old dies by suicide after rape

CRIME BEAT

BAREILLY, 6 MAY

A 26-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly raping an 11-year-old girl, who later died by suicide, police said on Wednesday.

According to ASP (South) Anshika Verma, the incident came to light on 27 April, when the girl, a Class 8 student, was dead her home in Deoria Abdullaganj village. Initially, the family reported the death as suicide and was reluctant to pursue police action.

"The autopsy report changed the course of the investigation as it confirmed sexual assault and multiple injuries on the minor's body, including bite marks and nail scratches, Verma said.

A breakthrough in the case came from the statement of the victim's younger sister, who told police that the accused, Zeeshan, 26, a resident of the same village, frequently loitered near the minor's school and gave her money to keep his interactions with her a secret.

Police said that on the day of the incident, the accused allegedly lured the minor and assaulted her. —PTI

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, or SAHAI at 080-25497777.

Accused in UP boy's rape, murder killed in encounter

HARDOI, 6 MAY

A 32-year-old criminal wanted in the rape and murder of a boy was killed in an encounter in the Hardoi's Mallawan area on Wednesday.

The encounter also left an official injured. The accused, Mehnoor, was the prime accused in the killing of a seven-year-old boy whose body was recovered from a maize field on Tuesday. Police said the child was kidnapped and raped. Mehnoor had allegedly used a stolen SIM card to make a ransom call to the minor's family, hoping to mask the rape.

He had a dozen criminal cases registered against him. —PTI

DELHI BOXER'S MURDER ACCUSED HELD AFTER 8 MONTHS

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Delhi Police have arrested a 38-year-old man accused in the murder of a national-level boxer in outer Delhi last year, officials said on Wednesday. The accused, Sumit Rana alias Chhotu, was held from Adarsh Nagar after evading arrest for over eight months in the killing of boxer Vikas Dagar, alias Bhinda.

Rana, a member of the Sonu or 'thekedar' gang, was wanted in a case registered at Baba Haridas Nagar police station on 30 July, 2025. Police said the boxer, a resident of Nangli Sakrawati in Najafgarh, was shot dead on 29 July, 2025, in a pre-planned attack linked to an old rivalry.

Four accused, including gang leader Sonu Thekedar, were involved. Sonu allegedly opened fire, killing the boxer on the spot, after which all fled. One accused was arrested earlier, while others were declared proclaimed offenders.

Sonu was arrested in April, and Rana was later tracked and apprehended. He admitted involvement and evading arrest by shifting hideouts. Police said Rana, a hotel management diploma holder, had worked abroad before returning to Delhi and joining the gang. —PTI

BEHIND BARS FOR VIOLENCE

Woman's Insta ruse gets husband arrested

PRAYAGRAJ, 6 MAY

A woman allegedly lured her estranged husband through a fake Instagram profile and got him arrested for assault and intimidation when he turned up to meet her, police said on Wednesday.

Soni Tripathi, who has been living at her parental home in Jagpura village in Nawabganj police station area for the past four years after being allegedly driven out by her husband, created a fake Instagram account and sent him a friend request, officials said.

Her husband, Prabhudutt Tripathi, a resident of Kalakankar in Pratapgarh district, befriended the profile and continued chatting, during which he allegedly agreed to marry her, unaware of her true identity.

—AI

According to the complaint lodged with the police, Prabhudutt had asked the woman to meet him at a hotel on several occasions. However, she asked him to meet her at the Nagvasuki temple in the Daraganj police station limits on 2 May, 2026.

Prabhudutt arrived at the temple along with a friend, where Soni was already present with her face covered with a scarf, while her parents and brother stood at a distance, police said.He failed to recognise his wife and began interacting with her. As soon as Soni removed her scarf and spectacles, the accused allegedly assaulted her and threatened to kill her before attempting to flee, they said.

Her family members then intervened, caught him and alerted the police by dialling 112, following which he was taken into custody. —PTI

- Soni Tripathi, who has been living at her parental home in Jagpura village in Nawabganj police station area for the past four years after being allegedly driven out by her husband

T'gana nurse sells newborn after declaring baby dead

HYDERABAD, 6 MAY

Four people, one of whom was a nurse at a private hospital, were arrested in Medak district of Telangana for allegedly selling a newborn baby for Rs 1.5 lakh after falsely telling the mother that her child had died soon after birth, police said on Wednesday.

A 27-year-old woman, who was seven months pregnant, was travelling with her husband from Hyderabad to their native place in Papannapet mandal of Medak district last month.

On the way, she was allegedly attacked by monkeys in Medak town while eating snacks, causing her to fall and sustain bleeding injuries, a police official said. She was taken to a hospital in Medak, where she received treatment.

On 13 April, she delivered a baby girl at the hospital. However, a nurse informed her that the newborn had died shortly after birth and was declared stillborn. The woman was later discharged.

The nurse, through a mediator, allegedly sold the baby to a childless couple in Siddipet district for Rs 1.5 lakh. Police said the nurse received Rs 1.4 lakh, while the mediator was paid Rs 10,000. The nurse reportedly covered the delivery expenses.

During a follow-up visit, the woman was allegedly informed that her baby had not died but had been sold. She then approached the police on 3 May and lodged a complaint.

During the investigation, the police rescued the baby and handed her over to the mother on Tuesday. The nurse, the mediator, and the childless couple who purchased the baby were arrested the same day. —PTI

BLIND PATRIOTISM

A suited man blinded by a flag walks off a ledge in the latest work of the elusive artist 'Banksy'. Like most of his work, this statue in Central London too has a political undertone. It is a stark reminder that nationalism, when unexamined, can blur the line between pride and peril —SCREENGRAB

Post Sindoor, India eyes air, cyber & drone boost

OP SINDOOR ANNIVERSARY

Operation Sindoor has not only redrawn red lines when it comes to India's response to acts of terrorism, but also offered some key military lessons, including joint and cohesive use of air power, bolstering of drone technology and building a robust communication system, say experts.

Recalling the decisive military action launched exactly a year ago on the intervening night of 6-7 May, several defence and strategic affairs experts concurred that the military operation also emphasised that future conflicts would play out not only in airspace, but also in cyberspace and information and cognitive domains.

And, indeed, the Indian military wasn't just battling against a barrage of hostile drones that came from across the western border, from Leh to Sir Creek, in multiple waves during the nearly four-day conflict, but also countering an intense misinformation campaign that sought to damage the morale of the forces and the masses.

Air Commodore Gaurav M Tripathi (retired), who also played a role during the operation, while acknowledging the criticality of air power in deciding the outcome of a conflict, underlined that in any future scenario, "combined air power" of the three services should be leveraged so that it can work cohesively against a "capable adversary."

"During (Operation) Sindoor, we saw a mass of drones used by Pakistan. Most of them were harmless, just to engage Indian weapons and munitions so that attack drones could come in later.

"But the enemy is smart. Next time, what they will send will be hardened drones, which will probably be more difficult to jam... have better navigation at the end, might not need GPS, (and) they might have electro-optical homing devices. And, they will probably collaborate as a swarm," Air Commodore Tripathi told PTI.

The former IAF officer, who took an early retirement last August, has flown multiple kinds of fighter jets and commanded a Hawk Mk 132 squadron, and also served as a chief operations officer of a fighter base.

Experts emphasised that future conflicts would play out not only in airspace, but also in cyberspace —ANI

In the IAF, there has already been some investment in anti-drone capabilities, "but anti-drone capabilities will really have to be proliferated, and cover all important points," he said, on the military lessons learned from the operation.

"We used them (S-400 system) very offensively; we moved them around very frequently. We camouflaged them as well and used their decoy forms to deceive the adversary. This technique in military parlance is called camouflage, concealment and deception or CCD," he said.

Sharing his own experience of being part of the operation last year, the former IAF officer underlined that what was "probably pioneered in this operation, and I think it will become part of IAF's concept of operations, is offensive utilisation of long-range surface-to-air missiles".

Military experts said another lesson from the operation is to "expedite and complete the networking of aerial assets", which the Indian Air Force would draw from it.

Former Army officer Lt Gen Dushyant Singh (retd) said Operation Sindoor has demonstrated that "red lines have been pushed further" when it comes to counter-terrorism stance of India, and New Delhi is ready to "call the nuclear bluff of the adversary."

The retired army officer, also the director general of Delhi-based think-tank Centre For Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), underscored that "speed, depth and level of response, all those red lines have increased" and that requires military preparedness.

In that context, certain structural lessons and military policies have emerged from it. And certain logistic lessons can also be derived from the conflict, he said.

Operation Sindoor was launched to avenge the deadly Pahalgam terror attack, with Indian forces conducting precision strikes on multiple terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK).

Pakistan later also launched offensives against India, and all subsequent counter-offensives by India were also carried out under Operation Sindoor.

The military conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, lasting nearly 88 hours, halted after they reached an understanding on the evening of 10 May.

On the first anniversary of the Pahalgam attack, the Army in a post on X said, for acts against India, "the response is assured", and carried a digital poster bearing an image portraying three armed soldiers in uniform standing next to each other against a backdrop that depicted a large red circle, with a caption "OPERATION SINDOOR CONTINUES...".

One of the 'Os' in the word 'SINDOOR' was depicted by a bowl carrying a dash of 'sindoor' (vermilion), and a red line at the bottom printed in crimson hue.

Lt Gen Singh (retd) underlined that future operations are going to be multi-domain, "from space to undersea", with a "web of communication" functioning simultaneously and not just as a "chain communication".

Therefore, military communications will have to be robust and resilient to electronic warfare, cyber warfare and disruptions from space, he said, pitching for speeding up the indigenisation process.

Dinakar Peri, Fellow, security studies programme at Carnegie India, argued that "Op Sindoor was a watershed moment for India and the subcontinent in the way it established a military threshold, and the asymmetry between India and Pakistan."

"That said, it also holds several lessons for India to maintain that superiority in the next conflict. Pakistan, and by extension China, knows what the Indian military is capable of and, more importantly, what the limitations are. The next conflict or Op Sindoor 2.0 will not be like the last one," he said. —PTI

SALAR سالار

WB's jobless teachers are cautiously optimistic

Following the BJP's landslide victory in the West Bengal assembly election, a section of unemployed teaching staff, whose jobs were annulled by the Supreme Court order in 2025, on Tuesday said they now look forward to some appropriate steps by the new government for reinstatement of their employment.

They said they voted keeping in mind the "uncertain future" they have been facing, and expressed hope that the new administration would meet their long-pending demand for transparent and timely appointments.

In April 2025, the Supsreme Court ordered the cancellation of the appointments of over 25,000 teaching and non-teaching staff recruited through the West Bengal School Service Commission, citing large-scale irregularities and manipulation in the 2016 recruitment process when the TMC was in power.

"Due to the unimaginable corruption and nepotism by the previous government, most of the jobless teachers are staring at an uncertain future," Mrinmoy Mondal, one of the jobless teachers, told PTI.

"We now look forward to some appropriate steps by the new government for legally reinstating the deserving teachers," said Mondal, also the spokesperson of West Bengal Untainted Teachers Association.

'Untainted', 'deserving' or 'eligible' teaching or non-teaching staff are those whose involvement in the irregularities in the case was not proved.

Mehboob Mondal of the Eligible Teachers Forum said, "Many candidates who have been demanding their jobs back can only hope for a breakthrough, but uncertainty still looms large over their future."

Mondal was among the hundreds who had launched a sit-in before the West Bengal SSC headquarters in April-May last year and spearheaded an agitation.

Senior BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari had met the jobless teachers at their protest venue to extend support to them.

Abhishek Sen, an SSC 2016 waiting-list candidate, said, "We were in a dharna for 1,300 days at the foot of the Mahatma Gandhi statue (in central Kolkata). Despite being qualified, we remained on the waiting list. We voted keeping that in mind, and now it appears that the movement may not be entirely in vain."

Another candidate, Sushanta Ghosh, who has been agitating for upper primary recruitment, questioned the track record of the system.

"In the last 15 years, SSC examinations were held only twice. There have been allegations of corruption in primary recruitment as well. A notification for upper primary recruitment was issued in 2016, but that process is still incomplete," he said.

Achintya Samanta, a 2014 Primary TET-qualified candidate, recalled the prolonged protests and alleged police action against the agitators.

"During a protest, a woman police constable bit candidate Arunima Pal. Instead of taking action against her, 30 of us, including Arunima, were charged with criminal cases. We remembered all this while voting," he said.

Sajal Dutta, a teacher who lost his job following the apex court order, expressed hope that the new regime will complete the fresh recruitment process initiated by the Mamata Banerjee government with written tests and interviews in September-October.

"We, the 'qualified' candidates, lost our jobs due to corruption under this government. However, it was also under this government that a fresh recruitment process began, which is supposed to be completed by 31 August. How the new government will go ahead with this job remains to be seen," he said.

Sarbari Mukherjee, one such teaching staff member, said, "Hope the new government will take note of our problems. We are not associated with any political party."

In its order, the Supreme Court had observed that the selection process had been "vitiated" by corruption, including tampering of OMR sheets and illegal appointments beyond the notified vacancies.

The verdict triggered widespread protests, with affected candidates demanding reinstatement of "genuine" candidates and fresh, transparent recruitment.

The issue has since become a major political flashpoint in West Bengal, with opposition parties accusing the TMC government of institutional corruption, while the then ruling dispensation maintained that steps were being taken to rectify the process and ensure fair recruitment going forward. —PTI

In April 2025, the Supsreme Court ordered the cancellation of the appointments of over 25,000 teaching and non-teaching staff, triggering widespread protests —PTI

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

TVK rewrites poll math to shatter Dravidian duopoly in TN

- TVK also obliterated what was considered DMK's stronghold — Chennai and its suburbs. Except for Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni and Harbour constituencies, both staked by DMK bigwigs Udhyanidhi Stalin and P K Sekarbabu, the party dominated the capital and its fringes

In the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, first-time contender TVK seems to have racked up a bagful of statistics that many thought was impossible even on the day of counting.

Emerging not as a third player but as a dominant political force, the party's performance has effectively dismantled the long-standing bipolar hegemony of the DMK and AIADMK in several key battlegrounds.

The most startling revelation from the 2026 data is TVK's ability to eclipse the combined strength of the two Dravidian giants.

In four specific constituencies, TVK's solo vote share was higher than the sum of the DMK and AIADMK votes - a feat previously unheard of for a debutant party in the state's modern history.

In four specific constituencies, the solo vote share of Vijay's TVK was higher than the sum of the Stalin's DMK and AIADMK votes - a feat previously unheard of for a debutant party in the state's modern history —PTI

Heading this list is Dr Radhakrishnan Nagar, where TVK's N Marie Wilson pulled off a statistical masterclass. Wilson secured 53.97 per cent of the vote, while the DMK (26.56 per cent) and AIADMK (14.8 per cent) together managed only 41.4 per cent. Remarkably, Wilson's margin of victory alone (27.41 per cent) was larger than the total votes polled by the runner-up.

In Madavaram, M L Vijayprabhu nearly doubled the combined total of his rivals, securing 52.61 per cent. Similar stories of total displacement played out in Shozhinganallur and Maduravoyal, where candidates ECR P Saravanan and Rhevanth Charan pushed the traditional powers into a distant second and third place, respectively.

This is taken a step further in Tiruppur (North), where the TVK victory margin of 69,992 votes was higher than the 61,760 votes polled by the major Dravidian parties combined — DMK got 351 votes and AIADMK 61,409 votes.

The 2026 election also yielded an "ultimate nail-biter" moment in Tiruppattur (185), where TVK's Seenivasa Sethupathy R won by a historic single vote, polling 83,375 against the DMK's 83,374.

TVK also obliterated what was considered DMK's stronghold — Chennai and its suburbs. Except for Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni and Harbour constituencies, both staked by DMK bigwigs Udhyanidhi Stalin and P K Sekarbabu, the party dominated the capital and its fringes. The party won with a consistent 45-plus per cent threshold in all Chennai constituencies, crossing the 50 per cent threshold in Perambur, Thiruvottiyur, Poonamallee, Avadi, and Ambattur.

In fact, had the TVK won Tiruttani, a Chennai suburb -- which was instead claimed by AIADMK's G Hari with 37.34 per cent of the votes -- the party would have secured a continuous sweep of constituencies 1 through 17.

Other high-stake constituencies in which TVK carved out a consistent 40-45 per cent vote share include all major Madurai divisions (North, South, Central, West, and East), the industrial heartlands of Coimbatore North and Tiruppur North, where it nearly touched the 50 per cent mark.

Despite these landmark victories, the 2026 results also highlight the geographical and demographic challenges TVK must still navigate. The party faced significant resistance in the Cauvery Delta and the Deep South.

The party also struggled in rural belts like Tiruvannamalai, Dharma puri, and Thanjavur, where the organisational depth of the AIADMK and DMK managed to hold the line.

Specific losses in Arcot (where AIADMK's S M Sukumar secured a 46.77 per cent win) and Vaniyambadi (lost to IUML) suggest that while the TVK wave was powerful, it was not yet universal. The party also narrowly missed out in Dindigul and Tittakudi, losing by less than 1.5 per cent in both instances.

While it is not a record-breaking high, TVK chief Vijay scored the highest vote share recorded in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections at 58.89 per cent in the Perambur constituency. In comparison, in 2021 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections, the highest vote share by a winning candidate was secured by I Periyasamy of the DMK. He contested from the Athoor constituency and achieved a vote share of 72.11 per cent.

In all, the 2026 data paints a picture of a transformed Tamil Nadu.

By consistently crossing the 40 per cent and 50 per cent thresholds in diverse districts, TVK has proven it is not merely a "spoiler" but a primary choice for a significant portion of the electorate. As the dust settles on these statistics, the 2026 Assembly polls will be etched in history as the moment the "Dravidian Dualism" was finally challenged by a formidable new arithmetic. —PTI

— SCREENGRAB

Fire at a shopping centre in Iran kills 8, injures 40

TEHRAN, 6 MAY

A fire in a shopping centre near Iran's capital killed eight people and injured 40, Tehran's emergency service department said Wednesday. The fire started on Tuesday in the Arghavan shopping centre in Andisheh town in Tehran province. It was not clear what caused the blaze. Iran's state television IRIB said authorities were investigating. Television footage showed firefighters battling the flames as large plumes of black smoke billowed from the multistory building. There was no indication the blaze was linked to the US war against Iran. —*PTI*

US kills 3 on 'drug boat' in the Pacific

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

The US military launched another strike on Tuesday on a vessel suspected of transporting drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing three men. The attack came a day after US forces struck an alleged drug boat in the Caribbean Sea, killing two people. The US government's campaign of blowing up alleged drug-trafficking vessels in Latin American waters has continued since early September despite the ousting of Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro and killed at least 191 people. The strikes have ramped up again in recent weeks, showing that the government's aggressive measures to stop "narcoterrorism" are not letting up. The military has not provided evidence that any of the vessels were carrying drugs, and even if they were, experts question the legality extra judicial killings. —*PTI*

— X

WH correspondent dinner attacker faces more charges

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

A California man accused of trying to storm the White House Correspondents' Association dinner and attempting to kill President Donald Trump was indicted Tuesday on a new charge over claims that he fired a shotgun at a Secret Service officer during the attack. Cole Tomas Allen initially was charged in a complaint with attempting to assassinate the president and two additional firearms counts. He faces a maximum sentence of life in prison if convicted of the attempted assassination charge alone. Allen's attorneys have questioned the strength of the government's theory that their client intended to kill the president or fired a shot that struck the officer. —*PTI*

Burkina Faso detained journalist and others: RSF

DAKAR, 6 MAY

Burkina Faso's authorities secretly held and abused a prominent investigative journalist and dozens of others in a makeshift detention facility in the capital, said Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said on Wednesday, in the latest crackdown on political dissent in the West African nation. RSF said Atiana Serge Oulon, editor of the newspaper L'Evenement, was taken from his home in June 2024 by several armed men in civilian clothes. The junta said he had been conscripted into military service, but RSF said Oulon and up to 40 others were held in a guarded house as of late 2025, and were allegedly beaten by guards and forced to drink toilet water. His current location is unknown. Oulon had previously alleged corruption in the military. —*PTI*

Iran, US 'close' to 14-point 1-page deal: Report

China backs Iran's call for end to 'illegitimate war'

WASHINGTON/BEIJING, 6 MAY

The US and Iran are close towards a preliminary accord aimed at halting current hostilities and establishing a framework for expansive nuclear talks, according to a report.

The framework consists of a "one-page, 14-point memorandum of understanding" designed to trigger an immediate ceasefire and launch a "30-day negotiation window" to hammer out a broader settlement, Axios reported, citing sources. Notably, this is similar to what Iran has been demanding recently.

The US would also agree to lift its sanctions and release billions in frozen Iranian funds, and both sides would allow around transit through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran would reportedly agree to a short-term pause in nuclear enrichment, in what has been a sticking point for both nations. Axios said that Iran may agree to a 12-15 year pause – a midway point between Iran's initially proposed five-year halt, and the US 20 year demand Following this period, the proposal would allow Iran to "resume limited enrichment to 3.67 percent."

The memorandum is being negotiated between US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner and several Iranian officials, the report said.

An Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson, cited by Iran's ISNA news agency, said Tehran would convey its response via Pakistan while US President Donald Trump said it was too soon to consider face-to-face meetings to sign an agreement.

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minster Abbas Araghchi met Chinese counterpar Wang Yi in Beijing. Wang said that "relevant parties" should work towards reopening the Strait.

Wang added that China believed that Gulf countries "should take their future into their own hands", seen as jab at their reliance on the US for security. Wang also called the US-Israeli war "illegitimate".

Following the developments markets on Wall Street soared overnight and US crude prices plunged 13 per cent —*Agencies*

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in Beijing, on Wednesday —*IRNA*

AUS TO BUILD $7.22B FUEL RESERVE

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has unveiled a 10 billion Australian dollar (USD 7.22 billion) initiative designed to bolster national fuel inventories. The package aims to facilitate the creation of a government-owned reserve, providing a buffer against international supply disruptions. Comprising approximately 1 billion litres (264 million gallons), it will ensure Australia maintains a minimum of 50 days of fuel onshore to shield the country from shocks.

US to close consulate in Peshawar citing safety concerns

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

The US has announced the phased closure of its consulate in Peshawar, citing a commitment to the safety of its diplomatic personnel.

"Responsibility for diplomatic engagement with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will transfer to the US Embassy in Islamabad," a US State Department spokesperson said in a statement on Tuesday. "This decision reflects our commitment to the safety of our diplomatic personnel and efficient resource management".

The US administration's policy priorities in Pakistan remain steadfast despite the change in physical presence in Peshawar, the statement added.

Notably, after the US and Israel assassinated Iran's former supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, massive protests broke out in Pakistan, with demonstrators storming the US consulates in Karachi. At least nine people were killed in clashes between protesters and law enforcement on 1 May.

Later, on 3 March, the Department of State ordered non-emergency US government employees and family members from its consulates in Lahore and Karachi to leave Pakistan due to safety risks.

However, after the situation settled, Islamabad hosted the first round of direct talks between Iran and the US since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, amid intense security. —*Agencies*

Medical staff with hazmat suits work to evacuate patients from the ship- which reported the outbreak of hantavirus —*X @DRTEDROS*

Hanta contact tracing begins

PRAIA, 6 MAY

The hantavirus outbreak onboard a cruise ship has forced a cross-continental contact-tracing effort. Officials are now scrambling across Europe and Africa in search of people who earlier left the ship MV Hondius. It departed over a month ago from South America for stops in Antarctica and remote Atlantic islands.

Two Argentine officials investigating the origins of the outbreak said the government's leading hypothesis is that a Dutch couple contracted the virus while bird-watching in Ushuaia before boarding. They may have been expose to rodents at a landfill, an unusual case in a region with no prior hantavirus record. The ship left Argentina on 1 April.

WHO said passengers represent 23 nationalities and are without symptoms, and isolating in their cabins.

The WHO said the Andes strain detected can spread between people and is typically found in Argentina and Chile. Cases have since been confirmed in Switzerland, South Africa and Senegal.

The WHO has said the ship itinerary included stops across the South Atlantic, including mainland Antarctica.

A Swiss patient, who disembarked at St Helena, is being treated, while his wife is isolating. The South African health ministry says officials have traced 42 out of 62 people, including health workers, they believe had contact with the infected.

But 20 people still need to be traced, including five people who may have been on flights to South Africa with some of the passengers as well as flight crew members.

Some may have now travelled overseas, the ministry said. —*PTI*

250 SKELETONS RECOVERED FROM CHEMMANI MASS GRAVE IN SRI LANKA

COLOMBO, 6 MAY

The number of skeletal remains recovered at the alleged mass grave site in Chemmani reached 249 during the third phase of excavation work, a human rights lawyer said.

A Sri Lankan court ordered the recommencement of excavation work on a mass grave in Chemmani last week, on the outskirts of Jaffna, seven months after it was halted due to a lack of funds.

Chemmani came under focus in 1998 at the height of the conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government troops for an alleged mass grave. Some 15 skeletons were discovered then. During the second phase, which lasted 45 days, 240 skeletal remains were recovered.

Till Tuesday, nine skeleton remains were recovered in the third phase, rights lawyer Ranitha Gnanaraja, who is present at the excavation site on behalf of the aggrieved, said. She added that coins and jewellery were found. —*PTI*

Russia snubs Ukraine's ceasefire, launches drones

KYIV, 6 MAY

Russia fired dozens of drones at Ukraine in nighttime attacks, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday, disregarding a unilateral ceasefire announced by Kyiv that began at midnight.

The Russian Defence Ministry stated that Ukraine hadn't abided by its own ceasefire, claiming that air defences shot down 53 Ukrainian drones over the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and the Black Sea between Tuesday evening and dawn Wednesday.

Five people were killed by a Ukrainian drone strike on the city of Dzhankoi in Crimea, according to Russia-installed Gov Sergei Aksyonov.

Russian forces launched 108 drones and three missiles overnight, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said, with attacks continuing throughout the night and into Wednesday morning.

Notably, on Tuesday, Russian drone and missile strikes on Ukraine killed 27 people and wounded 120 others, all of them civilians, according to Ukrainian Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko. Ukraine's ceasefire proposal states that it would respond "in kind" to Russia.

However, there has been no indication that Russia would abide by Ukraine's proposal. Instead, Russia has indicated that it would hold a ceasefire for its Victory Day parade on Friday and Saturday.

On the roughly 1,250km front line, meanwhile, Russia's bigger army remains engaged in a slow-moving and costly slog against Ukraine's drone-heavy defences. —*PTI*

Russian forces launched 108 drones overnight on Tuesday at Ukraine, while Kyiv killed five in occupied Crimea —*UKRAINE EMERGENCY SERVICES*

'15,000 Pakistanis deported from UAE, savings seized'

DUBAI, 6 MAY

The United Arab Emirates has reportedly deported 15,000 Pakistan nationals and seized their savings, according to a report.

Majority of those deported over the past week were Shia Muslims – the dominant religious group of Iran - who has lived in the UAE for years, and even decades, the report by New Lines Magazine stated. Both the UAE and Pakistan are predominately Sunni.

- Majority of those deported over the past week were Shia Muslims – the dominant religious group of Iran. Pakistan and the UAE are Sunni majority

"Many of them told me they were taken to detention centers and then flown to Pakistan without even being given their identity documents. They also said that their bank accounts were blocked by the UAE," the report stated.

Notably, thousands of migrants, especially from countries such as India and Pakistan go to the UAE for work, and Dubai has built its economy around them.

However, the UAE has been moving against its allies recently. Last month, the UAE demanded that Pakistan repaid a $3.5 billion loan, which forced Saudi Arabia to backstop Islamabad. The UAE also left OPEC, and has been at odds with Saudi in Yemen and Sudan. —*Agencies*

Ahead of Pope meet, Rubio wants to send Cuba aid through churches

WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that the US wants to humanitarian aid to Cuba through churches. His comments come ahead of his meeting with Pope Leo XIV over the weekend.

"We gave Cuba $6 million of humanitarian aid, but obviously they won't let us distribute it. We distributed it through the church. We'd like to do more," Rubio said at a press briefing with White House Spokesperson Karoline Leavitt on maternity leave.

Rubio hinted at discussing Cuba with the Pope.

Notably, Rubio said "there was no (US) oil blockade" on Cuba. Instead, he claimed that the Venezuela had "decided" to stop giving Cuba "free oil". The island nation has been reeling under frequent blackouts due to continuous sanctions from the US.

"The problem with Cuba is worse," Rubio insisted. He said the reason Cuba could not fix its economy was "not just because they're communists – that's bad enough, but they're incompetent communists".

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump continued to attack Leo, claiming the pontiff was making the world less safe.

"The Pope would rather talk about the fact that it's OK for Iran to have a nuclear weapon," Trump said on Monday. "I think he's endangering a lot of Catholics and people."

Leo responded by saying that the Vatican has always been for peace and against nuclear weapons. "If someone wants to criticise me for announcing the Gospel, let him do it with the truth." —*Agencies*

Pope Leo XIV and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio are set to meet over the weekend —*x*

Vivek wins Rep nomination for Ohio Guv post

COLUMBUS, 6 MAY

Indian-origin Republican leader Vivek Ramaswamy has secured the party nomination for the post of Ohio Governor, according to a CBS News projection following Tuesday's primary election.

The biotech billionaire's victory sets the stage for a high-stakes showdown in November against Democrat Amy Acton, the former director of the Ohio Department of Public Health, who advanced through the primary without opposition.

The 2025 Republican field was initially expected to feature Attorney General Dave Yost and former Ohio State University football coach Jim Tressel. However, Yost withdrew after the state Republican Party and Donald Trump threw their weight behind Ramaswamy, while Tressel chose not to enter the contest.

Ramaswamy comfortably defeated Casey Putsch, a small business owner popularly known as "The Car Guy." —*ANI*

18 MEN SHOW UP

Man creates Tinder profile of ex, invites men to rape her

Accused Asad Hussain, 36, was found guilty of stalking —*x*

LONDON, 6 MAY

A man in England's Greater Manchester allegedly created several fake Tinder profiles of his ex-girlfriend and invited men to "rape" the woman, police said. The accused, 36-year-old Asad Hussain, has been found guilty of stalking.

At least 18 men turned up at the woman's home after receiving messages about "rape fantasies" they thought were from her but were sent by Hussain. The messages encouraged the men to break into her house and rape her.

- In what Cheshire Police described as "one of the most disturbing" cases, Hussain would tell men the woman they thought they were texting had "rape fantasy"

Cheshire Police described it as "one of the most disturbing" cases it had ever investigated.

The victim met the accused in April 2024 and eventually started dating him. However, he grew increasingly controlling. On one occasion he rang her doorbell for two hours because a male friend was visiting.

The two broke up in May 2024. A month later, Hussain reportedly created the profile under the name of 'Mick Renney'. Pretending to be the woman, he would tell men on Tinder that the person they thought they were messaging wanted to be "roughed up" and if she said "no", it meant she "wanted it more".

Hussain was found guilty of stalking, involving serious alarm or distress, assault by beating, and failure to comply with a legal notice, after a nine-day trial at Chester Crown Court. —*Agencies*

Gold, silver prices rebound amid easing tension

NEW DELHI, 6 MAT

Gold prices rebounded by Rs 2,900 to Rs 1.55 lakh per 10 grams on Wednesday, while silver climbed to Rs 2.54 lakh per kilogram amid easing geopolitical tensions triggered a pullback in oil rates, boosting demand for precious metals. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity jumped by Rs 2,900,that is nearly 2 per cent, to Rs 1,55,400 per 10 grams from Tuesday's closing level of Rs 1,52,500 per 10 grams. Traders have attributed the price surge to reports that Washigton and Tehran are close to finalising a framework agreement to end months of conflict in West Asia, raising hopes of smoother flows through the Strait of Hormuz and easing inflation concerns tied to energy markets. *—PTI*

NMDC hikes iron ore prices by Rs 200 tonne

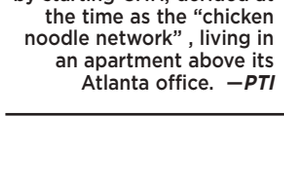
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

State-owned mining company NMDC announced on Wednesday that it has raised prices for both iron ore lump and fines by Rs 200 per tonne. The new prices are effective from this Wednesday. According to its regulatory filing, NMDC fixed the price of baila lump ore at Rs 5,500 per tonne and fines at Rs 4,700 per tonne, up from the Rs 5,300 and Rs 4,500 rates set during the previous revision on 5 April. Lump ores are high-grade, containing 65.5 per cent iron, whereas fines are lower-grade with 64 per cent or less iron content. Hyderabad-based NMDC falls under the Ministry of Steel and contributes around 20 per cent of India's total iron ore production. *—ANI*

Shashi Vempati named CBFC chairperson

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Shashi Shekhar Vempati, former CEO of Prasar Bharati, was on Wednesday appointed as the Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) by the government. Official sources said that Vempati will succeed Prasoon Joshi, who has been appointed as the Chairman of the Prasar Bharati recently. An alumnus of IIT Bombay, Vempati is an author and also the co-founder of the AI4India Org, which works towards democratising access to Artificial Intelligence technology. Joshi, a well-known lyricist-poet, served as the CBFC chairperson for over eight years. The CBFC is a statutory body under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, regulating the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act, 1952. *—PTI*



CNN founder Ted Turner dies at age 87

NEW YORK, 6 MAY

Ted Turner, an outspoken television pioneer who transformed the news business by launching CNN in 1980, has died at age 87. CNN reported that he died on Wednesday, citing a Turner Enterprises news release. Turner owned professional sports teams in Atlanta, defended the America's Cup in yachting in 1977 and donated USD 1 billion to United Nations charities. He once bragged, "If only I had a little humility, I'd be perfect." Turner's signature achievement was creating CNN, the first 24-hour, all-news television network. Turner's own frustration with television news was the instigator. He often worked past 8 pm, after the ABC, CBS and NBC nightly newscasts had already gone off the air. He took a chance by starting CNN, derided at the time as the "chicken noodle network" , living in an apartment above its Atlanta office. *—PTI*

Exports hit record $863B in FY26 led by service sector

Four consecutive quarters deliver peak export performance

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The four quarters of 2025-26 individually recorded their highest-ever export performance, a feat achieved for the first time in the country's trade history *-PTI*

India's total exports scaled an all-time high of USD 863.11 billion in the financial year 2025-26, up from USD 825.26 billion in the previous year. This registered growth of 4.59 per cent has been stated in data released by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S) and the Reserve Bank of India.

The milestone is significant not just for its record value, but the four quarters of 2025-26 individually recorded their highest-ever export performance, a feat achieved for the first time in the country's trade history.

The star of India's export story this year is the services sector. Services exports surged to USD 421.32 billion in 2025-26, compared to USD 387.55 billion in 2024-25, a robust growth of 8.71 per cent. Demand for India's IT, business solutions, and professional expertise continued to expand globally.

On the merchandise front, exports grew modestly from USD 437.70 billion to USD 441.78 billion, a growth of 0.93 per cent. Merchandise imports alone jumped 7.46 per cent to USD 774.98 billion, while services imports rose 3 per cent to USD 204.67 billion.

While global uncertainties in goods trade weighed on the pace of expansion, India's merchandise exports maintained their upward trajectory, providing a stable base to the overall trade basket.

- India's total exports scaled to an all-time high of USD 863.11 billion in the financial year 2025-26, up by 4.59 per cent from USD 825.26 billion in the previous year.

However, the record exports came alongside rising imports. Total imports (merchandise and services) climbed to USD 979.65 billion in 2025-26, up from USD 919.92 billion, growing at 6.49 per cent.

Outpacing export growth and widening the overall trade deficit. *—ANI*

OIL PRICES DECLINE

Sensex jumps 940 pts, Nifty at 24,330 as Iran talks progress

MUMBAI, 6 MAY

Sensex rallied 940 points while Nifty settled above 24,300 on Wednesday following a sharp decline in crude oil prices after US President Donald Trump claimed progress in negotiations with Iran towards an agreement to end the war with Iran.

Helped by fag-end heavy buying, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 940.73 points, or 1.22 per cent, to settle at 77,958.52. The 50-share NSE Nifty rallied 298.15 points, or 1.24 per cent, to end at 24,330.95.

Supportive domestic developments, including the government's credit guarantee scheme for businesses, boosted banking stocks, Ajit Mishra at Religare Broking Ltd, said. Among the 30-Sensex firms, InterGlobe Aviation was the biggest gainer, soaring by 6.6 per cent. Meanwhile, Reliance Industries was the biggest loser, shedding 1.8 per cent.

BSE SmallCap Select index jumped 2.25 per cent and the MidCap Select index by 2.10 per cent. Banking, financials, and realty led the rally, while energy and FMCG lagged.

Optimism around a US–Iran peace deal drove a sharp fall in crude prices. *—PTI*

VI shares nearly 5 pc higher

Shares of Vodafone Idea ended nearly 5 per cent higher on Wednesday after Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla was appointed non-executive chairman of the debt-ridden telecom firm.

The stock climbed 4.63 per cent to settle at Rs 11.30 on the BSE. At the NSE, shares ended at Rs 11.30, up 4.62 per cent. Its market valuation climbed from Rs 5,417.16 crore to Rs 1,22,427.63 crore.

JAL case: Adani files caveat in SC to pre-empt Vedanta

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Adani Enterprises filed a caveat before the Supreme Court, anticipating a challenge by Vedanta against the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal's (NCLAT) verdict upholding Adani's resolution plan for Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL).

A caveat is an application filed before a court by a party requesting that no order be passed in a matter without first hearing it.

The NCLAT on Monday dismissed Vedanta's appeal challenging the approval of Adani's resolution plan by the Committee of Creditors in the JAL insolvency proceedings.

The appellate tribunal observed that it found no merit in the seven issues raised by Vedanta.

Vedanta contended that its revised offer of Rs 17,900 crore was superior to Adani's Rs 14,535-crore plan as Andani failed to maximise value for Vedanta stakeholders.

The company also questioned the transparency of the CoC's scoring matrix. *—ANI*

PIVOT TO DOMESTIC SUPPLIES

Services sector hits 5-month high in April: PMI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India's services sector growth climbed to a five-month high of 58.8 Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) in April, a monthly survey showed on Wednesday. As firms pivoted from international to domestic suppliers amid the West Asia crisis, growth in new orders and output accelerated.

According to survey participants, competitive pricing, e-commerce and particularly strong customer demand for relocation and logistic services boosted sales growth.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose from 57.5 in March to 58.8 in April, showing the strongest rate of expansion since last November. However, the rise was among the slowest in the past two-and-a-half years.

The HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index compares current business activity to the previous month. In PMI terms, a reading above 50 indicates expansion while a reading below 50 signals contraction.

Though inflation eased in April, it remained among the highest since November 2024. Firms cited food, fuel and labour costs, as well as gas shortages. However, only part of this additional cost burden was transferred to customers, as signalled by an increase in selling prices. The overall rate of charge inflation receded to a three-month low.

"Input cost inflation moderated but remained elevated, while output price inflation stayed subdued, indicating that firms are absorbing higher costs," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC. *—PTI*

Andhra breaks ground for Rs 1,000 cr AC unit

AMARAVATI, 6 MAY

Andhra Pradesh IT Minister **Nara Lokesh** on Wednesday laid the foundation stone for Carrier Global's air-conditioner manufacturing facility at Sri City in Tirupati district, with the company set to invest Rs 1,000 crore in the project.

The facility is expected to generate employment for around 3,000 people, while strengthening the state's manufacturing ecosystem.

The project is part of the state government's broader push to position Andhra Pradesh as a major manufacturing hub, particularly in advanced cooling and infrastructure-related sectors.

The facility will support the expansion of allied industries while contributing to export-oriented manufacturing in the region.

Sri City has emerged as a major Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) manufacturing hub, attracting large investments and generating significant employment opportunities over the years.

The Andhra Pradesh government is focusing on attracting international companies through industry-friendly policies, infrastructure support and large-scale industrial corridors, the press release added. *—PTI*

INDIAN FIRMS TO INVEST $20.5B IN US ECONOMY

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Indian investments at the 2026 Select USA Investment Summit reached a record USD 20.5 billion as industry leaders cement their roles as primary partners in the US economy.

The pharmaceutical sector dominated, with planned investments exceeding USD 19.1 billion, led by Sun Pharmaceutical's planned USD 11.75 billion acquisition of US-based Organon & Co.

In the industrial sector, JSW Steel is set to commission USD 255 million in projects at its Ohio and Texas plants. Meanwhile, 12 other Indian firms announced over USD 1.1 billion in US expansions, led by the Abhyuday Group's USD 900 million across five sites, to create 1,500 jobs. *—PTI*

SEBI sets ₹20,000 crore mutual fund AUM rule

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Sebi introduced a framework on Tuesday, classifying an index as a 'significant index' if it is benchmarked by mutual fund schemes with a six-month average cumulative assets under management (AUM) exceeding Rs 20,000 crore.

The regulator said the threshold will be assessed for half-yearly periods ending on 30 June and 31 December.

Once classified, an index will continue to remain in the "significant" category unless its tracked AUM falls below the threshold for three consecutive years.

The regulator has also released an initial list of qualifying indices, including widely tracked benchmarks such as the BSE Sensex and Nifty 50, as well as broader market indices like the Nifty 500 and BSE 500.

Sebi said index providers offering any of these significant indices are required to apply for registration with it within six months. However, this requirement will not apply to indices already notified or authorised by the RBI.

The move comes after the introduction of the Sebi (Index Providers) Regulations, 2024, which apply specifically to index providers administering indices that are of such significance. *—PTI*

RUPEE SURGES 61 PAISE TO CLOSE AT 94.57

MUMBAI/ NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The rupee appreciated 61 paise to close at 94.57 against the US dollar on Wednesday, as Brent crude prices retreated towards USD 100 per barrel.This comes after US President Donald Trump hinted at a possible deal with Iran. The Reserve Bank of India is pursuing "non-direct" strategies to support the currency.

INR TO HIT 95 BY END-2026: BMI

The rupee is likely to trade sideways at around Rs 95 by the end of 2026, BMI said on Wednesday. BMI said India's GDP will grow 7.6 per cent. The US–Iran conflict has weighed on emerging market currencies, especially major energy importers like India, reflecting its heavy reliance on imported fuel. *—PTI*

Nationwide free health check-up initiative starts on Thursday

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Union Minister of Labour & Employment **Mansukh Mandaviya** will launch a nationwide free 'Annual Health Check-Up Initiative' on Thursday for workers aged 40 and above, as proposed under the new Labour Codes.

The initiative will be formally inaugurated at the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Medical College & Hospital in New Delhi.

Simultaneous launch events will also be held at 11 other ESIC hospitals across the country.

This initiative is aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Shramev Jayate' framework, for dignity of labour and social security for workers.

The rollout is anchored in reforms introduced through the four New Labour Codes,

A key provision under the new labour framework, these check-ups will be conducted through ESIC's extensive hospital network.

Further, for workers engaged in hazardous operations, medical check-ups are mandatory irrespective of age. *—PTI*

100% STAKE

KPIT to buy Israeli cyber firm for $120M

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The KPIT acquisition of Cymotive strengthens its automotive cybersecurity capabilities *-X/@ FREEPIK*

KPIT Technologies on Wednesday said it will acquire a 100 per cent stake in Israel-based automotive cybersecurity firm Cymotive Technologies for a total consideration of up to USD 120 million (INR 1,138 crore).

The acquisition will be executed in multiple tranches, starting with an initial investment of USD 10 million in preference capital, expected to close by June 2026. This investment will start adding to product- and licensing-led revenue streams, in addition to KPIT's established engineering engagements, the Pune based firm added.

This initial investment will convert into a 26 per cent equity stake. Following the conversion, KPIT plans to acquire the remaining stake in two further tranches, to be completed by mid-2029.

KPIT stated that the acquisition strengthens its automotive cybersecurity capabilities. The move enhances its value proposition by enabling global OEMs to integrate cybersecurity into vehicle platforms from the initial design phase through production and operations.

Headquartered in Tel Aviv, Cymotive was founded by senior Israeli cybersecurity leaders in partnership with CARIAD, the automotive software company of the Volkswagen Group.

The firm specialises in end-to-end vehicle lifecycle cybersecurity, spanning secure architecture, threat modelling, intrusion detection, continuous monitoring, and regulatory compliance. Cymotive reported a turnover of USD 19.2 million in 2025.

KPIT Technologies on Wednesday reported a 33.3 per cent decline in consolidated net profit for the January-March quarter of FY26. Revenue from operations rose 11.9 per cent to Rs 1,711 crore, up from Rs 1,528.3 crore in the same period last year. *—PTI*

Larsen & Toubro shares drop 4% after Q4 results

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Shares of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) declined nearly 4 per cent on Wednesday after the firm reported a 3 per cent drop in consolidated profit after tax (PAT) during the March quarter in FY26.

The decline was largely due to a high base, as the corresponding quarter of the last financial year included an exceptional gain of Rs 475 crore.

The stock dropped 3.84 per cent to Rs 3,900 on the BSE. At the NSE, it edged lower by 3.81 per cent to Rs 3,900.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, L&T said it received a 'mega' order worth between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15,000 crore from JSW Steel, which is expanding its crude steel processing capacity.

L&T has been entrusted with the engineering, procurement and installation of critical process facilities, mainly at JSW sites in Ballari, Karnataka and Paradip, Odisha.

L&T is a 32 billion dollar Indian multinational engaged in engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) projects, hi-tech manufacturing, products and services. *—PTI*

X/@ITALIANOPEN

Alexandra Eala secures first career win in Rome

ROME, 6 MAY

Alexandra Eala is up and running at the 2026 Italian Open, beating Magdalena Fręch in two hours and seven minutes in their first-round meeting. After storming to a first-set bagel, World number 42 Eala had to go the distance and emerged victorious in the decider, prevailing 6-0, 3-6, 6-4 at the WTA 1000 tennis tournament on Wednesday. Philippines star Eala lost on her tournament debut in Rome last year against Marta Kostyuk, but there was no such issue this time, with just her third victory of the season's clay swing. She converted six break points, including on the final service of the match from world number 45 Fręch of Poland.—*PTI*

FIFA extends Prestianni's ban worldwide

LONDON, 6 MAY

Argentina winger Gianluca Prestianni faces the prospect of missing his country's opening World Cup matches after FIFA extended his six-game suspension for homophobic conduct on Wednesday to have worldwide effect. The Benfica player was handed the ban by UEFA following accusations that he directed a slur at Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr during February's Champions League playoff clash, which Real won 1-0. "The FIFA Disciplinary Committee has decided to extend the six-match ban imposed by UEFA on SL Benfica player Gianluca Prestianni to have worldwide effect," a FIFA spokesperson told Reuters.—*PTI*

-PTI

Shanghai World Cup: Compound teams flop

SHANGHAI, 6 MAY

Indian compound men's and women's teams, considered strong medal contenders, endured a disappointing outing in Stage 2 of the Archery World Cup, failing to secure a podium finish after crumbling in crunch situations here on Wednesday. The biggest setback came from the women's team, who had won India's only gold medal at the season-opening World Cup in Mexico last month. The trio of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Pragati, and Aditi Swami crashed out in the quarterfinals, losing 227-233 to Turkey. The Indian trio failed to match the consistency of Hazal Burun, Defne Cakmak, and Emine Rabia Oguz, who seized control from the second end and never let go, sealing a comfortable six-point win.—*PTI*

Queen Sirikit Cup: IGU to send 3-member team

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Young golfer Guntas Kaur Sandhu will spearhead the Indian challenge at the Queen Sirikit Cup after the IGU named a three-member squad for the prestigious Asia-Pacific amateur team championship to be held in Indonesia from 12 to 15 May. Organised by the Asia-Pacific Golf Confederation (APGC) in association with The R&A (the world golf rules-governing body), a total of 15 countries, including defending champions South Korea, will compete in the tournament. The other countries include Australia, China, Chinese Taipei, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. India will be led by Sandhu, the 2025 Ladies Order of Merit champion. —*PTI*

RCB look to bat against struggling LSG

RCB are currently placed second on the table but remain tied on 12 points

LUCKNOW, 6 MAY

RCB VS LSG @ Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow
Match starts at
7.30 pm IST

Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look to rediscover their batting rhythm after a rare collapse in their previous outing as they aim to strengthen their play-off push against bottom-placed Lucknow Super Giants in a reverse leg IPL match here on Thursday.

RCB are currently placed second on the table but remain tied on 12 points with four other teams. They will need to regroup quickly after suffering a four-wicket defeat against the Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad.

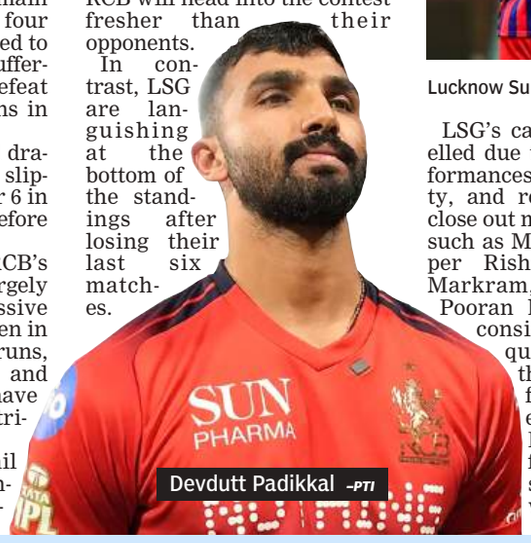
RCB's batting imploded dramatically in that match, slipping from 79 for 2 to 96 for 6 in the space of three overs before being bowled out for 155.

Despite the collapse, RCB's batting this season has largely revolved around aggressive intent. Virat Kohli has been in sublime form with 379 runs, while Devdutt Padikkal and skipper Rajat Patidar have also made important contributions.

With regular opener Phil Salt ruled out due to a finger injury, the responsibility of providing explosive starts alongside Kohli will rest on Jacob Bethell.

Having had a week's break, RCB will head into the contest fresher than their opponents.

In contrast, LSG are languishing at the bottom of the standings after losing their last six matches.



Devdutt Padikkal -PTI

Lucknow Super Giants team -PTI

LSG's campaign has unravelled due to inconsistent performances, tactical instability, and repeated failures to close out matches. Key batters such as Mitchell Marsh, skipper Rishabh Pant, Aiden Markram, and Nicholas Pooran have struggled for consistency, while frequent reshuffling of the batting order has further compounded their problems. Pant, in particular, finds himself under scrutiny over his white-ball form.

LSG's batting line-up now faces a formidable RCB bowling attack spearheaded by veteran Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood.

Krunal Pandya, too, has enjoyed an impressive campaign, claiming nine wickets and troubling batters with an effective bouncer variation.

For LSG, Prince Yadav and Mohsin Khan have been the standout bowlers with 13 and 10 wickets respectively. Mohammed Shami started the season strongly but has struggled for consistency and leaked runs in recent matches. LSG's pace attack has repeatedly lost control in the death overs, allowing opponents to accelerate sharply, and will face a tough task when they face RCB batters.

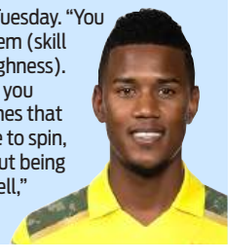
RCB had defeated LSG by five wickets in the first leg and will come into the match with a lot of confidence.

RR to sport an all-pink jersey vs GT on 9 May

Indian Premier League franchise Rajasthan Royals on Wednesday revealed an all-pink jersey, which the side will sport during its IPL 2026 clash against the Gujarat Titans at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur on 9 May. This decision is part of the #PinkPromise, a joint initiative by RR and Rajasthan Royals Foundation to leverage cricket for women-led transformation in rural Rajasthan. The team has also promised that for every six that is hit during the Royals vs Titans clash on 9 May. —*PTI*

Akeal bosses powerplay overs with 'skill and mental fortitude'

For a spinner who bowls the majority of his overs in the powerplay, Chennai Super Kings' West Indian import Akeal Hosein relies as much on mental fortitude as his skills to excel in the most unforgiving phase of the game. With just two fielders in the deep in the first six overs, the margin for error is minuscule, and the pressure is sky high. However, Hosein thrives in that tense environment. The left-arm spinner returned with frugal figures of 3-0-15-1 in the powerplay to play a crucial role in his team's eight-wicket win over Delhi Capitals in an IPL match here on Tuesday. "You need both of them (skill and mental toughness). Especially when you come upon pitches that aren't conducive to spin, and it's just about being disciplined as well," he said.



We would want Kuldeep to be better than this: Badani

Delhi Capitals head coach Hemang Badani wants premier spinner Kuldeep Yadav to rediscover his best form with the franchise's playoff hopes hanging by a thread following the loss to Chennai Super Kings. Defending a below-par 155, DC were able to apply some pressure in the powerplay, but Samson smashed Kuldeep for three sixes in his three overs that went for 34 runs. Kuldeep was brought in to get the breakthrough; instead, he ended up releasing the pressure on the opposition. Eventually, CSK coasted to the target in 17.3 overs. Kuldeep's overall IPL economy rate has hovered around eight, but this season it has crossed the 10-run mark, while the wickets too have dried up.

PCB SENDS LEGAL NOTICES TO DEFAULTING BROADCAST AND BUSINESS PARTNERS

LAHORE, 6 MAY

The Pakistan Cricket Board on Wednesday launched a strong campaign to recover dues to the tune of billions from defaulting franchises, broadcast and business partners to fill up organizational coffer.

According to a PCB source, recently, legal notices were sent to various PSL franchises, business and broadcast partners asking them to clear their pending dues to avoid facing any legal action, which could lead to the cancellation of their respective contracts.

"Initially, some defaulting franchises of the Pakistan Super League were also sent notices to clear their outstanding annual fees or face action. These franchises have now cleared their dues but also asked the board to clear their share from the central pool for the franchises pending since 2010," the source said.

He said in response to a franchise's grievance that their annual fees were delayed since the board had not cleared their full share of around PKR 96 crores from the central pool for the PSL 10th edition that the franchise was told bluntly that unless contracted parties honour their commitments, the board cannot clear dues.

Ban on bilateral sports with Pakistan to continue: Ministry

The Sports Ministry on Wednesday said the blanket ban on bilateral sporting ties with Pakistan that was imposed last year will remain in force, but athletes from across the border will not be stopped from coming here for multi-lateral events.

The ministry also reiterated its commitment to simplify the visa process for sportspersons, team officials, technical personnel, and office-bearers of International Sports Governing Bodies to position India as a "preferred sporting destination".

"Insofar as bilateral sports events in each other's country are concerned,

Indian teams will not be participating in competitions in Pakistan. Nor will we permit Pakistani teams to play in India," the ministry stated in a circular issued to all National Sports Federations (NSFs), the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), and the Sports Authority of India (SAI), among others. —*PTI*

BENGALURU WAS TO HOST THE FINAL

Disappointed that IPL playoff matches allotted to other centres: KSCA

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) on Wednesday expressed its "disappointment" after the IPL 2026 final was shifted from Bengaluru to Ahmedabad by the BCCI.

Bengaluru was to host the final, going by convention, as Royal Challengers Bengaluru are the defending champions, but the BCCI shifted the venue to Ahmedabad without specifying the exact reason.

The Board, however, said that the final venue was shifted "owing to certain requirements from the local association and authorities that were beyond the scope of BCCI's established guidelines and protocols".

At the start of IPL 2026, KSCA president Venkatesh Prasad announced that the BCCI had decided to allot seven matches to Bengaluru, five home matches of Royal Challengers Bengaluru, along with a play-off and the final.

"At the outset, KSCA expresses its disappointment that the IPL Playoff matches have been allotted to other centres. KSCA president Venkatesh Prasad was in touch with the BCCI in this regard and had also formally conveyed KSCA's preparedness, willingness, and keen interest in hosting the IPL Playoffs at the iconic Chinnaswamy Stadium," said Vinay Mruthyunjaya, KSCA's official spokesperson.

-KSCA

KSCA distances itself from IPL 2026 ticket resale probe

The Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) on Wednesday firmly distanced itself from the ongoing probe into alleged black-market ticket sales linked to Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) matches in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, stating that it has no role in the distribution or sale of tickets to the public.

KSCA Spokesperson Vinay Mruthyunjaya said the body is "neither the ticketing agency nor the selling authority" for RCB games, adding that ticket sales "are undertaken exclusively through authorised channels of the franchise and its designated ticketing partners."

Clarifying its limited role, the association noted it only receives a "limited allocation of tickets," which are distributed strictly to cricket-playing clubs, permanent members, and certain statutory or government authorities. It underscored that "KSCA does not sell tickets to the general public." —*PTI/ ANI*

Gukesh beats World C'ship challenger Sindarov in Poland

WARSAW, 6 MAY

World Champion D. Gukesh got the better of his 2026 World Championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov in their rapid game at the Grand Chess Tour: Super Rapid & Blitz Poland 2026 in Warsaw on Wednesday.

Playing with the black pieces, Gukesh defeated the Uzbek Grandmaster in 52 moves, converting a rook-and-minor-piece ending after Sindarov's dangerous passed h-pawn was stopped on the seventh rank.

The game began with Sindarov choosing 1.e4, to which Gukesh replied with 1. c6, entering a Caro-Kann structure. The early sequence went 2.Nf3 d5 3.d3 Qc7 4.exd5 cxd5 5.c4 Nf6 6.Nc3 e6 7.g3 Bb4 8.Bg2 dxc4 9.Bf4 Qa5 10.dxc4 Bxc3+. Gukesh obtained active play with Black and held the position together as pieces came off. Sindarov, meanwhile, tried to create counterplay with his advanced pawns and kept the game alive deep into the endgame.

The closing phase was sharp. Sindarov placed his rook on the eighth rank and pushed his h-pawn to the seventh, but Gukesh's rook became active, and his knight played a crucial defensive role.

The final sequence went 44.Ra8 a3 45.h4 Ne5 46.Bd5 Bc6 47.h5 Bxd5 48.cxd5 Ra1 49.h6 Rg1+ 50.Kf4 f6 51.h7 Rxg4+ 52. Ke3 Nf7, after which Sindarov resigned.

The win carried added significance as it came in a direct meeting between the two players scheduled to contest the next World Championship match. —*PTI*

Indian players dominate ITF W15 Tumakuru Open

TUMAKURU, 6 MAY

The exit of eighth seed Akanksha Dileep Nitture in the women's singles was the lone jarring note in an otherwise impressive second-day outing for Indian players in the ITF W15 Tumakuru Open here on Wednesday.

Akanksha was outplayed by Arina Arifullina in a one-sided 6-1, 6-1 Round of 32 match.

Akanksha, coming into the tournament with solid credentials, struggled to find her rhythm against an aggressive and consistent Arifullina.

Indian Players Shine in Singles Matches

In an all-Indian clash, Laxmisiri Dandu staged a remarkable comeback to overcome Prathyusha Rachapudi 1-6, 7-5, 6-3. Kashish Bhatia was in ruthless form as she brushed aside wild card Amodini Naik 6-1, 6-1. Jennifer Luikham also impressed, battling past Chevika Reddy Sama 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 in a hard-fought three-set encounter. Among the seeded Indians, third seed Vaidehee Chaudhari lived up to expectations with a composed 6-3, 6-4 win over Soha Sadiq, while fourth seed Zeel Desai delivered the most dominant performance of the day, steamrolling Jeetesh Kumari 6-0, 6-0.

Top seed Justina Mikulskyte of Lithuania and second seed Zuzanna Pawlikowska of Poland had comfortable outings, cruising past their respective Indian opponents in straight sets. —*PTI*

Akanksha Dileep Nitture -X/@TOPEN

BUKAYO SAKA FIRES ARSENAL

1st Champions League final in 20 years

LONDON, 6 MAY

Arsenal is back in the Champions League final for the first time in 20 years thanks to a late first-half goal from Bukayo Saka that secured a 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid on Tuesday night.

Saka was on hand to slot in the rebound after Leandro Trossard's shot was saved by Jan Oblak in the 45th minute to put Arsenal up 2-1 on aggregate in the second leg of their semifinal.

The Gunners' stingy defense did the rest as Arsenal has now kept a clean sheet at home in all three knockout rounds. The team also conceded a competition-low four goals in winning all eight of its matches in the league phase.

It will be Arsenal's second final in Europe's premier competition, having lost the 2006 title match to Barcelona. This time, it will face either defending champion Paris Saint-Germain or Bayern Munich in Budapest, Hungary, on May 30. PSG won the pulsating first leg of their semifinal 5-4, and the second leg is in Munich on Wednesday.

It could prove a special season for the London club, which is now one game away from its first European Cup title and three games away from a first Premier League crown in 22 years. The Gunners are guaranteed the domestic league title if they win their remaining three matches, after closest rival Manchester City was held to a 3-3 draw at Everton on Monday.

Atletico had a chance to equalise in the 51st when Giuliano Simeone chased down a poor backward header from William Saliba to round goalkeeper David Raya, but center back Gabriel did just enough to make him put his effort wide.

Atletico was then denied a possible penalty when Arsenal defender Riccardo Calafiori stepped on the foot of Antoine Griezmann in the area, as referee Daniel Siebert awarded a free kick to the hosts for an earlier incident instead. —*PTI*

Bukayo Saka -X/@ARSENAL

Delhi to host 2026 Commonwealth TT C'ship

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Delhi will host the 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championship 2026 at the Thyagraj Stadium, with players from more than 35 countries expected to participate, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Wednesday.

The championship is being organised from 27 July to 2 August, jointly by the Delhi government and the Table Tennis Federation of India.

Announcing the event at the Delhi Secretariat, Gupta said the city has a long legacy of hosting international sporting events and the championship would further strengthen Delhi's position on the global sporting map.

"The Delhi government is committed to ensuring world-class infrastructure, seamless arrangements and an excellent sporting environment for players and spectators alike," she said.

According to the officials, participants from countries including England, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, Scotland, Wales, Nigeria, Kenya, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago are likely to take part in the tournament. —*PTI*